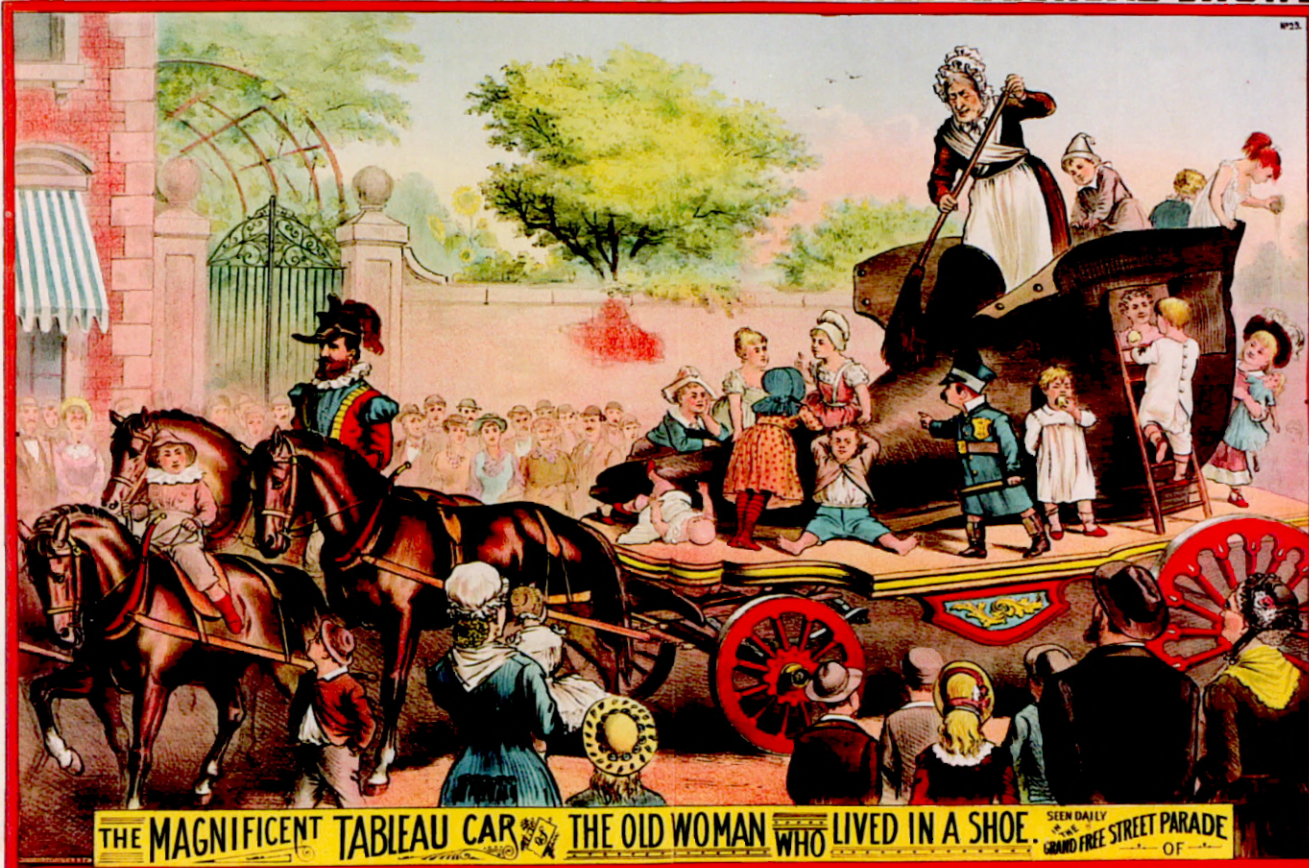


BANDWAGON

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

JULY - AUGUST 2004

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BANDWAGON

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS

HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Vol. 48, No. 4

JULY-AUGUST 2004

FRED D. PFENING, JR. EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Fred D. Pfening III, Managing Editor

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A. M. Nathans and E. D. Colvin toured Nathans & Co. Circus in 1882 and 1883.

This 1882 poster was printed by the Strobbridge Lithographing Co. From the Cincinnati Art Museum collection.

THE BACK COVER

This illustration is the back cover of the 1915 Barnum & Bailey Circus courier.

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MONTGOMERY QUEEN

Short Term Circus King

By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

Montgomery Queen owned a large stable at 229-231 Washington Street in Brooklyn, New York. In addition to buying and selling horses and running a livery and feed business, Queen started the first stage lines from Fulton Ferry to Fulton Street and Tompkins, Flatbush and DeKalb Avenues. He later started a line from Flatbush and Brooklyn to City Hall.

Adam Forepaugh organized his circus during the winter of 1865. As a wagon show Forepaugh made contact with livery and feed men in various cities along the show's route.

Forepaugh was very impressed with Queen and was quite friendly with him, who he saw as an energetic businessman. Queen was a flamboyant character who wore diamonds, dressed in a lavishing manner and interacted well with people.

At age fifty-one Queen became interested in circus management and was considering a career change.

In the fall of 1872 Forepaugh purchased the equipment of the failed Rosston, Springer and Henderson Circus. He invited Queen to buy half interest in the show and its management for the 1873 season. The Rosston equipment was renovated in the Forepaugh winter quarters at Hatboro, near Philadelphia. In the spring of 1873 the new show came out of the quarters titled Montgomery Queen's Great European Menagerie, Transatlantic Circus, Roman Hippodrome, and Troupe of Bedouin Arabs.

The staff included Montgomery Queen and Adam Forepaugh, proprietors; Frank Rivers, general director; R. D. Curtiss, contracting agent; Levi J. Zullock, advertising agent; Frank H. Rosston, equestrian director; William Marker, superintendent of animals; John Forepaugh, baggage stock master and Prof. D. W. Norris, band leader.

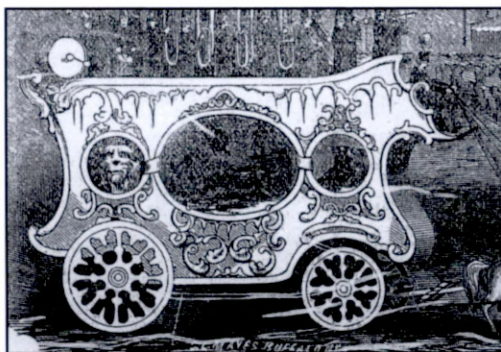
A new band chariot was built by Fielding Brothers of New York.

New harness was furnished by Lloyd of Albany. There were twenty four cages in the menagerie, painted red and gold and well decorated, and twenty baggage wagons. One hundred men were employed and there were 200 horses.

The performers included Jeanette Baras, Charlotte Reed, Charles F. Reed, Harry King, riders; Nat Austin and Jerry Cohan, clowns; Charles Burrows, Charles Woods, and Les Markoes, acrobats; Mons. Gero-ux, juggler; the Ali Ben Abdallah Troupe of Bedouin Arabs, tumblers, fourteen in number; two trick horses, two ponies and two trick mules.

After opening the wagon show quickly moved West, playing over seventeen stands in Pennsylvania. It entered Ohio on May 8 at Youngstown and remained in that state until May 29. It then showed a month and a half in Indiana. It was in Michigan for a week and cut back through Indiana to finish the season in Illinois, with a few Wisconsin dates filled interspersed. The final

This drawing appeared in an 1873 Queen newspaper ad. It may be an artist's rendering of the Felding bandwagon. Circus World Museum collection.



stand was in Chicago from October 9 to 18.

A winter quarters was established in the Chicago area at the Morris, Illinois fair grounds. The operation was a success from the start. By end of the season Queen had bought Forepaugh's interest in the circus.



Montgomery Queen.

The Queen operation suffered a serious blow with a winter quarters fire on February 24, 1874. The *Chicago InterOcean* told the story in a February 25 article, "Intelligence by telegraph was received last evening, from Morris, Illinois, announcing the destruction by fire of the Floral Hall on the fair grounds of Grundy County, which had been rented for the winter by Montgomery Queen, the circus manager, and where were stabled over 150 horses, which were connected with Mr. Queen's extensive establishment. A reporter called last evening at the Commercial Hotel, where Mr. Queen is boarding, for the purpose of ascertaining the full particulars of the loss incurred by that gentleman. He learned that as soon as Mr. Queen heard of the burning of the stables and a part of this valuable property he went down to Morris to ascertain the full extent of his losses.

"Mr. George S. Cole, Mr. Queen's treasurer, was found at the Commercial, and he informed the reporter that forty of the best horses had been consumed. Fortunately, all of the pad horses were saved, but most of the animals which are employed in the entrée

act were burned. A few of the harness were also destroyed, but aside from the burning of the horses, Mr. Queen's loss was inconsiderable.

"Mr. Cole stated that the deplorable accident would not at all retard the movements of the company. He thinks that the fire could have been the result of the grossest carelessness. The building was completely isolated, and that Mr. Queen had taken such precautions against fire that he had not thought it necessary to insure the property, a fact for which the insurance companies are doubtless thankful."

Queen published this notice in the February 27 *Interocean*, "Having read several reports of my loss by fire on the fair grounds at Morris on the morning of the 24th instant, I deem it proper to acquaint the public with the facts, which are as follows: Forty of my best horses were burned and four missing. They consisted of entrée horses, chariot team and cage stock. There was also burned, one baggage wagon, four sets of harness, sixty tons of hay, and about two hundred bushels of corn. It is believed to be the work of an incendiary for the purpose of theft. The loss is about fifteen thousand dollars, no insurance. While the loss is a peculiarly one to me, it is no detriment to the show-going public, as more horses, wagons and harness will be purchased and built at once and the show will inaugurate the season of 1874 in Chicago, about the middle of April, with as fine an outfit as ever spread canvas west of New York, and as complete in all its details as if the fire had not occurred."

On April 5 a Chicago newspaper reported. "Montgomery Queen's Menagerie and Circus received a valuable acquisition on yesterday, consisting of several rare wild animals, numerous monkeys and baboons, a wart hog, an extraordinary large double-humped camel, a beautiful trick pony, four ring horses, an endless variety of birds, a giraffe cage, new tents, etc. A large black African lion, a Bengal tiger, a leopard, and quite a number of other animals are now on the road, and will probably arrive within two or three days. Mr.



Nat Austin, a clown with Montgomery Queen. Pfening Archives.

Queen declares that his zoological collection the coming season will be second to none. Active preparations are now going on at the West Side Rink, the present quarters of this great show, on the 20th inst, the show will emerge from its winter quarters with an entire new outfit. The equestrian department will be especially strong. The company consists in part of little Mollie

A San Francisco Queen ad used in 1874. Circus World Museum collection.

MONTGOMERY QUEEN'S

Mammoth Menagerie, Circus,
AND
TRAVELING WORLD'S FAIR!
Now on its way across the Continent.
By Special Train of Forty Cars,
Will Exhibit in this City for a Short Season, commencing on
Tuesday Evening, July 28th!
This is the Largest and Most Elaborately Equipped Establishment that has yet Visited The Pacific Coast.
It Comprises the Finest and Most TALENTED TROUPE OF ARTISTS.
THE LARGEST AND FINEST
COLLECTION OF WILD ANIMALS.

Brown, who executes the extraordinary feat of throwing forward and backward somersaults upon a bare backed horse, Frank Barry, bare-back, trick and hurdle rider; Leopold and Geraldine, aerial gymnasts; Charles and Carrie Austin, musket-drill artists; Philo Nathans and Robert Johnson, equestrians; Nat Austin and William E. Burke, clowns. Montgomery Queen is proprietor and manager; Ed D. Colvin, assistant manager; Charles C. Pell, general director; Claude Williams, press agent; George S. Cole, treasurer; Nat Austin, equestrian director and Robert Johnson, master of the arena. The first show will be given in this city on the 20th inst."

1874

The 1874 season opened in Chicago at the corner of West Madison and Elizabeth Streets on April 20, where it remained for three days, and then moved to the corner of State and Twenty-third Streets for two days April 20 to 23.

By early July Queen chartered a train to move the show to the West coast. Before leaving Chicago six cages of animals were given to the Lincoln Park Zoo. On June 20 John Forepaugh, Queen's senior animal trainer, left the show in Chicago for Minnesota, to join the circus on its way to California. Before leaving he placed several animals, formerly belonging to the show, in charge of the Lincoln Park Commission, and they were assigned quarters in the park. The collection consisted of a large African lion, two antelopes, one large elk, a couple of bears, a cashmere goat and a full-grown "bird of freedom."

The equipment was loaded on a train in Mankato, Minnesota in late June. It consisted of twenty-seven cars including two coaches. Surplus wagons and baggage horses were not loaded on the train. A few dates were played in Nebraska before making a long jump to Cheyenne, Wyoming. It played Salt Lake City on July 10 and 11. It played Nevada and was in Sacramento, California on July 25. From July 28 to August 16 the Queen circus played San

Francisco.

A larger parade was presented the day of the Frisco opening and a balloon ascension was made each evening at seven p. m. Soon after the first night's performance started, a group of local hoodlums appeared on the lot, armed with clubs and rocks they started a fight with the circus people. James Ramsey, a show employee, was hit in the head with a paving block, which fractured his skull. He died the next day. The police located the gang members and many were sent to jail.

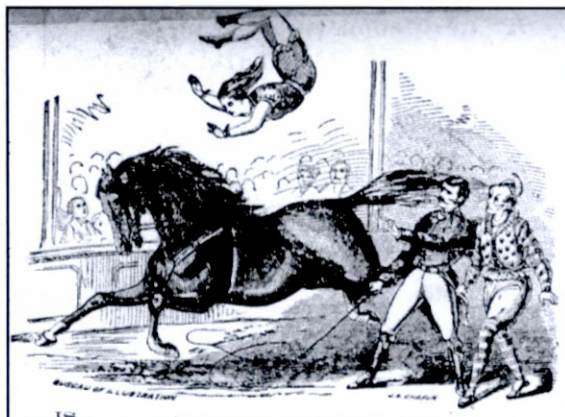
The stand turned out to be one of the most successful engagements of any circus in that city. The show was given in two big tents, one being the menagerie, which was extensively advertised. There was also a side show. Pat Harris and William Corban were arrested for exhibiting a human deformity, a five-year-old girl with two bodies from the waist down with four legs. Each was fined \$20.

George R. Bronson was general agent and E. Darwin Colvin was assistant manager. J. A. Emidy's British Cornet band furnished the music.

The 1874 performance was very strong. The acts included Molly Brown, fourteen year old somersault rider; Lizzie Stempel, rope skipping and jig dance; Madam Tournaire, Jeanette Ellser, Frank Brown, riders; Nat Austin, Frank Barry, George Gaston and Billy Burke, clowns; Carrie and Charlie Johnson, military specialties; the Belmont Brothers, Leopold and Geraldine, double trapeze act; Sig Feranti, contortionist; Charles King, Charles Burrows, gymnast; S. Graham and George Sloman, Romeo Sebastian and James A. Lee, equestrians and Charles and Carrie Austin joined.

After San Francisco the show played Redwood City, August 17; San Jose, 18; Gilroy, 19; Salinas, 20; Watsonville, 21; Santa Cruz, 22; Santa Clara, 23; Centerville, 25; Hayward, 26; and Oakland, 27-28. At the end of the season the circus established a winter quarters near Haywards, about seventeen miles from San Francisco.

The Queen circus was an over-



This drawing of Mollie Brown was in a 1875 Queen courier. Circus World Museum collection.

land show during its whole lifetime. No record has been found suggesting that Queen ever owned a train. However, system train cars were used by the show numerous times. The show often played towns that were not on a rail line. The staff listing provided to the *Clipper* each year never contained a trainmaster.

After going into winter quarters, Queen bought five sea lions and a number of California animals and birds were purchased.

According to an article about the quarters in the June 17, 1875 Stark County (Ohio) *Democrat*, reprinted from the *San Francisco Call*, "Queen erected numerous buildings for the accommodation of his wild beasts, warehouses for his cages, chariots, harness, tents, canvas; and the hotel of Troy furnishing superior homes for the managers and men in charge of the great moving World's Fair. In one large building, two hundred feet in length and sixty in width, is arranged on both sides plain,

A cage drawing from the 1876 courier. Circus World Museum collection.



warm, but very secure, cages and stalls for the animals.

"As you enter the door, in an apartment about thirty feet square heavily planked and bolted, stands Lalah Rookb, the mammoth Asiatic war elephant, weighing about five tons. By the kind invitation of Mr. A. J. Forepaugh, we stepped within the enclosure, and contrast our diminutive figure of that mountain of flesh. Mr. Forepaugh insists that she is kind, and that there is no possi-

ble danger, but the immense yellow bulldog, crouching away off in one corner, seemed to say, 'Look out stranger.'

"Our next visit was a row of double-humped camels and dromedaries, some very small ponies and two trick mules. Next we passed to the enclosure containing the white Japanese and Chinese peacocks, looking remarkably fine, and strutting about as if they were anxiously awaiting the opening of the sawdust season.

"Next in order was a majestic Royal Bengal tiger. Adjoining was a tawny African lioness, a doting parent of four young cubs. A beautifully spotted Senegal leopard was the sole occupant of the next iron-gated apartment. Col. Hudson then stepped forward and escorted us to the giraffe, standing almost twelve feet high, and is in itself worth a visit from every man, women and child on the Pacific Slope.

"We next visited the building in which were stored the cages, chariots and wagons, which have been overhauled, repainted, redecorated and gilded for the approaching season. Everything is in the finest condition, and a large number of entirely new cages, built in New York, have been received for the transportation of the giraffe and other new animals, which have recently been added to Mr. Queen's vast collection.

"The ring building, where horses are practiced and performers made perfect, which is a curiosity in its way, was the next object of interest that attracted our attention.

"The next building is where the canvas, poles, seats, harness were carefully cleaned, renovated, looking bright, and in a busi-

ness-like manner stored away.

"The season will open on Monday night, March 29, for a few weeks, and then make the grand tour of the Pacific Slope after which he moves across the continent. With Mr. James Robinson, Mr. Charles Fish, Miss Mollie Brown, Mr. Romeo Sebastian, as leading riding champions, and the great double circus troupe of star performers, in new sensational acts, and celebrated clowns, we predict a success for Mr. Queen wholly unparalleled in the history of shows."

1875

The Great Montgomery Queen's Monster Caravan, Gigantic Circus and Mammoth Menagerie opened the season in San Francisco at the corner of Jackson and Montgomery Streets on March 29, 1875 and stayed until April 22. Queen added a second ring to the show.

The admission for dress circle (chairs) was one dollar, the Parquette (bleachers) was fifty cents.

The staff in 1875 included Darwin Colvin, manager; C. C. Pell, general agent; O. P. Myers, press agent; George S. Cole, treasurer; J. A. Emidy, band master; Nat Austin, equestrian director; A. J. Forepaugh, zoological director; and Erastus Mead, canvas boss.

Queen had big top, menagerie and side show tents. There were 175 people on the show, 225 horses and 17 baggage wagons, 24 cages, a fine bandwagon and several tableau parade wagons.

Newspapers stated that the Queen parade was the most lavish and largest ever given in San Francisco. The parade wagons included the Allegorical band chariot "Great Pacific," with two horse carvings at the front corners and two giraffes at the rear corners; the "Triumph of Liberty" was twenty-four feet long and was pulled by ten white horses. Madame D'Atallie, a female Samson, drove it. A live leopard was at the feet of the Goddess of America. At the rear corners were life-sized statues of Justice and Columbus. Large eagles cov-



The Great Pacific bandwagon as pictured in the 1876 Queen courier. Circus World Museum collection.

ered the sides and there were male figures at the front corners.

A mounted guard of continental soldiers followed it. There was an open den of lions. A team of ten dromedaries drew the "Golden Car of the Conqueror." There was a cage of hyenas. Twelve Shetland ponies pulled a small tableau. In addition the parade included cages, chariots and a steam calliope.

Animals on the show included a giraffe, two elephants, a performing zebra, a performing guanaco, two performing kangaroos, and a den of four performing lions, and sea lions. A newspaper report stated that a rhinoceros was added to the menagerie.

The San Francisco *Call* published this after notice, "Montgomery Queen and his great circus combination received an ovation last evening at the hands of one of the largest and most enthusiastic audiences ever seen from the arena, upwards of four

Drawing of rider Sig Quaglieni in the 1876 courier. Circus World Museum collection.



thousand persons being in attendance. The company has just commenced their spring campaign, having been in winter quarters at Haywards since their recent tour through this State, during which time they have been in active training and receiving important accessions to their ranks. The entertainment last evening bespeaks a successful season. The performers were in excellent spirits and the great variety of feats of bal-

ancing, horsemanship, gymnastics and trained animals were generally executed with rare grace and precision.

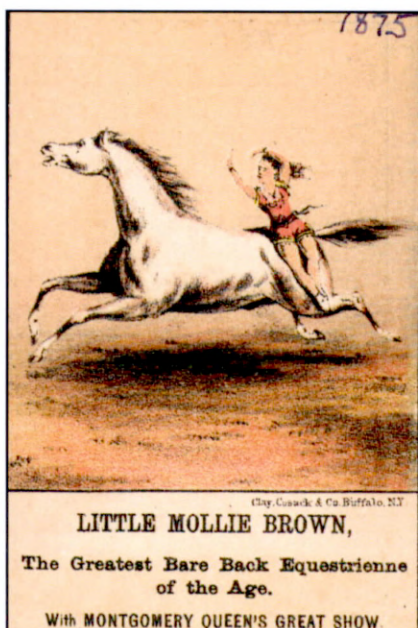
"The principal features of the program were the thrilling feats of Miss Mollie Brown, the daring equestrienne, who throws a double somersault while riding a bare-back horse, a pirouette riding by the renowned Sebastian, acts by the celebrated contortionist, Signor Farantio, the horizontal bar acts of Clifton Miacco, Gaston and Ashton, and the somersault and jockey riding by the justly famous Charles Fish.

"Nat Austin, the principal clown, appeared in his glory, stalking about the ring, and kept the audience convulsed with laughter, not allowing the entertainment to fag once.

"The menagerie connected with the circus will repay a visit. It has received many valuable additions since its recent exhibition, and no one attending the circus should miss seeing it.

"An entire new bill this evening. Until further notice two performances will be given daily—one in the afternoon and another in the evening."

The during the San Francisco engagement James Robinson joined the show. Along with Charles W. Fish and Romeo Sebastian the Queen lineup of riding stars was the greatest in the history of the circus. All were back and forward somersaulters over objects and any one of them was a very strong feature. In addition, Mollie Brown was a marvelous rider, and was the first woman somersault rider in America.



A trading card of Mollie Brown on Montgomery Queen. Pfening Archives.

A California route was played until late June. Queen was in Winnemucca, Nevada on June 17. On June 18 the Winnemucca Humboldt Register reported, "One of Montgomery Queen's circus wagons that was being taken down a grade by hand at Virginia City (June 13) got the advantage of the men in charge of it, and went crashing down the hill, through the yard, fence and into the house of Mr. S. E. Gillis on Carson Street, and seriously injured the sister and daughter of that gentleman. The wagon and contents weighed about four tons, and went crashing through the house knocking in the entire front, and into the room occupied by the injured inmates, who were in bed at the time of the accident. Queen settled for all damages, amounting to \$2,200."

The show then headed East on a hired train. It was in Reno, Nevada on June 11. By June 21-23 it was in Salt Lake City. Going by way of Wyoming and Colorado the show was in North Platt, Nebraska on July 10. After ten stands in Indiana the show went into Michigan on August 13. Queen played Toledo, Ohio on September 1. This after notice was published on September 3 in the Reno paper:

"Montgomery Queen—What Toledo people say of his show.

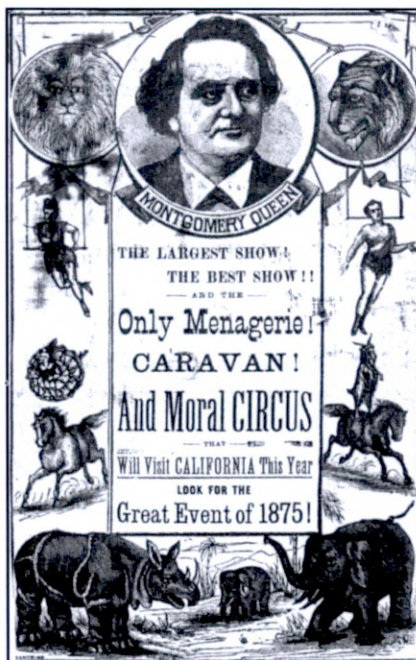
"We find the following in the Toledo Commercial of Thursday morning which will be of interest to all who desire to visit this excellent, entertainment in this city on the 4th, 6th and 7th of this month.

"Montgomery Queen has an excellent show, as hundreds who attended yesterday will testify. As for the menagerie, it is all it claims to be, in every respect, the collection of animals large and containing more of really rare animals than is often found in a traveling show and they are finely kept, although they have been brought all the way from California.

"The circus has many features that distinguish it above perhaps any other show traveling for there is hardly another that has such riders as James Robinion, Charles Fish, and Miss Mollie Brown. Robinion holds the championship as a bareback rider, and with his little boy, six years old, performs some of the most daring feats on horseback, but with perfect ease, while the little fellow displays great development in nerve and muscle, and with his perfect form and bright, childish face, becomes a great favorite everywhere.

"Charles Fish rode yesterday, and went through with his part as far as

The front cover of the 1875 Queen courier. Circus World Museum collection.



A trading card of Madam Tournaire on Montgomery Queen. She was Mollie Brown's mother. Pfening Archives.

his injured arm would allow, and his grace and daring won loud applause from the audience. Out of the ring he would surprise any person who would expect to find him only a common circus man; he is a thorough gentleman.

"Mollie Brown, the little equestrienne, is undoubtedly the most wonderful of lady bareback riders. Her riding is all of a difficult character, and her back somersault is something never before accomplished by any woman. She is but 15 years of age, and it seems hardly possible that so much could have been accomplished in so short a life. This is not all; Mollie Brown is possessed of a grace and modesty that win respect for her everywhere, at the same time that her daring feats gain applause.

"This show has been on the road many weeks, and traveled all the way from California, and yet there is an absence of the worn out trappings, costumes, that is really remarkable and not known in any other show that has been in Toledo this season, and this with the gentlemanly appearance of all connected with it, and the absence of side shows and other nuisances, make this a remarkable show and gain for it a reputation that this proprietor may justly be proud of."



An illustration of Madam Louise Brown's horses. Circus World Museum collection.

The show was in Detroit, Michigan August 26 and 27. A Detroit newspaper reported that the performance opened with the spec, Field of the Cloth of Gold, introducing elephants, camels, twenty-four horses, and the entire star company.

The acts included two performing elephants, Lalla Rookh and Princess Mollie, presented by A. J. Forepaugh; Frank Clifton, Albert Gaston, Miaco and Sam Ashton, triple horizontal bars; Romeo Sebastian, pirouette bareback riding; Billy Burke, clown; Nat Austin and Billy Burke, trick ponies; Tom Miaco, leap for life; William (Bud) Gorman, English jockey hurdle; Molly Brown, girl rider; Nat Austin, clown; Bonnie Runnells, tumbling; Burnell Runnells and Molly Brown, double equestrian act; contortion act, Sig Farranta; bareback riding by James Robinson, Poodles Sheridan and Jenny Lind; the magic barrel, Fred Levantine; thoroughbred dancing horses, Madame Louise Tournaire; Clarence Robinson, hurdle-leaping buffalo;

An illustration of wild animal trainer Prof. Pierce. Circus World Museum collection.



Billy Burke, clown; Charles W. Fish, rider; Nat Austin, performing guanaco; Eugene Robinson, manage pony; Charles W. Fish, Tom Miaco James Robinson and Master Eugene, ride of the champions; Billy Burke, clown; Ted Potter, comic mule.

Queen played Cleveland, Ohio on September 6. The *Cleveland Plain*

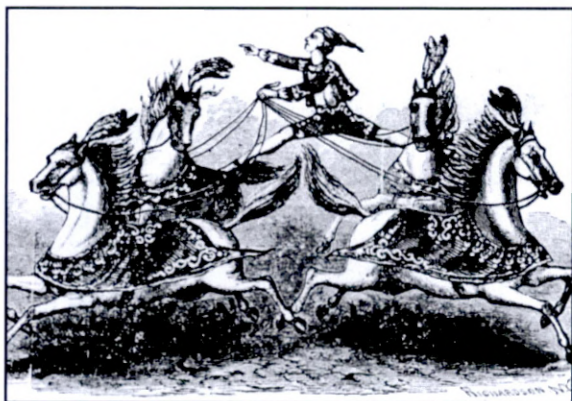
Dealer on September 7 published this after notice, "Montgomery Queen's circus and menagerie has an excellent show, as hundreds who attended yesterday will testify.

"As for the menagerie, it is all it claims to be in very respect, the collection of animals is large and contained more of really rare animals than is often found in a traveling show; an they are finely kept, although they have been brought all the way from California."

The circus played Rochester, New York on September 16. On that day the *Rochester Union and Advertiser* noted, "Montgomery Queen's great circus arrived in town this morning, and made a fine display in the streets. This show does not, however, make a free exhibition in the streets of all that it has. The price of admission is very low for the attractions it has to offer and the management is right in not giving away what patrons are willing to pay for.

"An important feature of Queen's show is in the menagerie, which embraces among other things, two large seals, a living giraffe, African lions, Bengal tigers, a very large and very small elephant, a camel, buffalo, ostriches, and kangaroos. In one cage are seven lion whelps, the largest not being much bigger than a full-grown raccoon. They attract attention wherever they are exhibited. The riding of James Robinson, Charles W. Fish and the accomplished young

Mollie Brown, all on bareback horses, exhibit a wonderful combination of grace, daring and skill. The trapeze performance, the tumbling, are all the best, while the riding of Mr. Robinson's trained cynocephalus is a very funny affair. We venture an approval of this show, in advance, on the strength of the unanimous verdict of the press everywhere. The *Buffalo Commercial* says, "There is not a single objectionable feature about the entire establishment, everything being conducted with perfect propriety; the seats are comfortably arranged and so placed that all have a full view of the ring.' We are very sorry that the weather is against this entertainment today, but the Falls Field location is so convenient that few, we believe, will be deterred from attending. There is no danger of getting wet under the canvas."



An illustration of four horse rider Abelardo Lowanda. Circus World Museum collection.

A newspaper ad for the October 4 Owego, New York date said there was no catch penny side show; a living giraffe, a pair of Indian elephants; 25 cage compartments of wild beasts and birds; James Robinson, rider; Mollie Brown, fifteen year old bareback somersaulting rider; W. E. Gorman, jockey hurdle rider; Romeo Sebastian, rider and Louise Tournaire, ménage rider.

The Queen show played Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on October 8. The *Harrisburg Daily Patriot* of October 9 reported, "The Montgomery Queen Circus arrived by rail from Williamsport. The parade was headed by the Golden Chariot, with a band on top, pulled by ten horses.

This was followed by some fine stuff of ring horses led by men walking.

Then came two performing elephants, two camels, some ponies, followed by trick mules. A giraffe van and a long line of cages made up the rest of the parade. An open den of lions with the trainer inside brought up the rear."

On October 11 the *Daily Patriot* reported, "Montgomery Queen Circus and Menagerie—this excellent show closed the tenting season at this point Saturday night. The animals, wagons, etc., have been removed to the large building known as the boiler shop of the Harrisburg Foundry and Machine Co., east of Harrisburg.

"All animals will be shipped in a week or ten days to California. Some of the van horses are to be sold in Harrisburg.

"This immense establishment did a fair business while in California and the West, but the effects of the panic of 1874-1875 made their trip east unprofitable."

The last part of the season had the show in New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland. The show was shipped back to the winter quarters in Haywards, California. It is clear that the 1875 season was not a winner for Queen.

1876

However, Queen reached into his deep pockets to open the Montgomery Queen Gorgeous Centennial on Wheels for the 1876 season in San Francisco April 23.

Queen pulled his horns in after paying large salaries to famous riders in 1875 and cut expenses.

The April 15 *Clipper* noted, "Montgomery Queen's special attractions will include Prof. Pierce's performing tigers; Mlle. Pauline and three performing lions; Zin-ze-bar and a den of nine performing hyenas. The Triumph of Liberty, a new allegorical band chariot, drawn by sixteen camels and will be introduced.

"The menagerie will include three performing elephants; a giraffe; baby kangaroos; two litters of Asiatic and African lions; baby monkeys; a baby camel; three Bengal tigers; a Brazilian tiger; nine hyenas; a new cage containing 100 birds; a zebu, a white deer and an eland."

Mollie Brown was back, as was Pierce the tiger trainer and rider Sig Sebastian. New to the performance in 1876 were Mme. D'Atalie, a strong lady known as the female Samson; the Mathews Family (10 in number); Drayton the hyena trainer; Mlle. Pauline, the lion queen and the Thompson elephants.

The show sported eighteen cages, twenty-six baggage wagons and five chariots and tableau wagons.

The performance opened with a spec titled the "Birth of Freedom" or a "Centennial Fete Day in America." The pageant included the entire company as well as pony's horses, elephants and camels. Appropriate music was played J. A. Emidy's band, producing wonderful effects with the ringing of the Independence Bell and firing a cannon.

Display 2. Gaston, Levantine, Mathews and Leopold, horizontal bars, double and triple.

Display 3. Albelardo Lowanda, somersaulting rider.

Display 4. William Thompson's elephants.

Display 5. Modern pyramid builders.

Display 6. Madame Louise Tournaire Brown, ménage act.

Display 7. Joe Kennebel, clown.

Display 8. Master Louis Sebastian. English postillion on four Shetland ponies.

Display 9. Ground and lofty tumbling.

Display 10. Mollie Brown, somersaulting girl rider.

Display 11. Joe, Eugene and Francois Kennebel, clown routine.

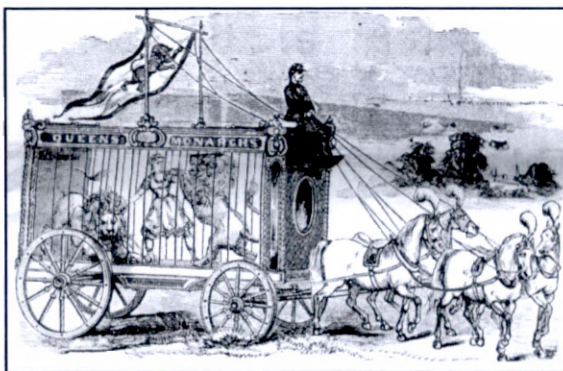
Display 12. William Organ, liberty horses.

Display 13. Mathews brothers and Mlle Laurette, aerial ladders.

Display 14. Madame D'Atallie, strong lady catching cannon ball.

Display 15. Master Francois D'Atallie, contortion and balancing.

Display 16. Madame D'Atalie, the Centennial



A cage drawing from th 1876 courier. Circus World Museum collection.

salute fired from an immense cannon carried on the naked shoulders of the French female Samson.

Display 17. LaSouvienne, the Shetland pony dancing club.

Display 18. C. C. Mathews, cloud swing.

Display 19. Sig Quaglieni (Sebastian), horse bare back carrying act.

Display 20. Fred Levantine, cross and barrel act.

Display 21. Sig Quaglieni, four horse courier of St. Petersburg.

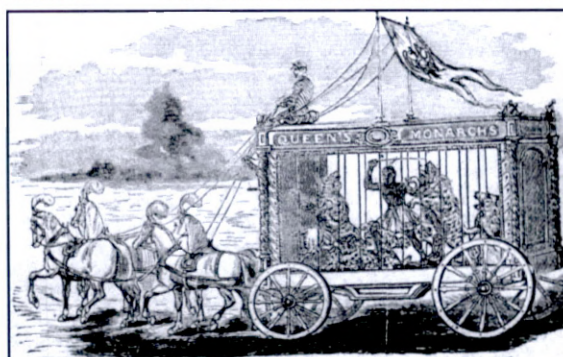
Display 22. Prof. Pierce with lions and tigers.

Display 23. A bicycle act.

The parade included a tableau called the Triumph of Liberty; an allegorical band chariot drawn by sixteen camels and three elephants.

The menagerie included a giraffe, a baby kangaroo; two litters of Asiatic and African lions; baby monkeys; a baby camel; three Bengal tigers; two leopards, nine llamas, an eland, a zebra, thirteen lions; over one hundred birds; a zebu; a white deer and a number of other animals.

A cage drawing from the 1876 courier. Circus World Museum collection.



As usual the San Francisco stand was opened with a colorful night parade.

A press release noted that the parade would be over a mile in length, with a long line of beautiful carved cages, embellished in the highest style of art. The Triumph of Liberty would be drawn by six snow-white horses, driven by the female Samson. The Car of Juggernaut, filled with lions and tigers and the Chariot of the Sun, in a steel-barred enclosure Zin-Ze-Bar, a native of Ethiopia would be surrounded by eight grave-robbing hyenas. Made-moiselle Pauline, the lion queen would ride in the Chariot of the Conqueror, surrounded by the monarchs of the jungle.

A near serious accident occurred during the parade when a cage containing a lion, a lioness and a tiger was turning the corner of Montgomery and Market Streets. The lion and the tiger charged each other suddenly. The keeper was in between them. The lion charged the keeper and bit his thigh. The cats were separated and the keeper was removed from the cage. He survived and was back with his cats at the next performance.

After the San Francisco engagement closed on April 25. Queen toured the state. Traveling by wagon and by train when rail was available. When moving overland Queen hired teams to move the show. Queen was in Bakersfield on July 16 and 17. On July 20 the show returned to San Francisco, from there it was shipped by boat to Los Angeles.

The Los Angeles engagement opened on July 24 for four days. San Luis Obispo was played August 15 and 16. The San Luis Obispo *Tribune* published this after notice on August 19, "The long-promised big show is over at last. The people came flocking in from all parts of the county on Tuesday, and the town wore a holiday aspect. In the evening it was estimated that as many as 3,000 people were present at the entertainment, which was up to the standard of such shows. On the second day there was a perceptible falling off in attendance. Not, however, from any lack of

appreciation of the performance, but lack of coin. Montgomery Queen is a success as a showman, and will succeed wherever he goes."

Queen worked his way back up North and played Roseburg, Oregon on September 12. Seattle, Washington was shown October 17 and 18. The steamer Eliza Anderson was specially chartered to move the show from Puget Sound to Victoria, British Columbia.

On October 21 the *Daily British Colonist* published this after notice, "Two entertainments were given yesterday by Montgomery Queen's Circus, one in the afternoon which, probably from the coldness of the weather and the shortness of notice, was not very numerously attended, and the one in the evening was patronized by a large concourse. The

and two children on her shoulders and by a variety of other feats.

"Miss Mollie, the only female bare-back rider on the Continent, as she is described, executes several very difficult equestrian novelties with unusual nerve and neatness. She is decidedly a great acquisition to the circus, and with Dayton, the cannon-ball juggler, Madame Brown, an accomplished rider, Austin, the clown and vocalist, two performers on the trapeze, and a host of other auxitaires, each of whom has some special excellence, the establishment is rendered as complete as talent can make it.

"Another attraction is the band which discourses a variety of musical selections during the entertainments.

"The spacious tent is capable of seating 2,000 persons is erected on the corner of Yates and Quadra Streets. Prices of admission—adults \$1 and children under 9 years of age, 50 cents. These are the only performances to be given as the company leave tomorrow for San Francisco."

The show closed in Victoria, British Columbia and was shipped to San Francisco and on to the winter quarters in Haywards.

1877

News of the Queen show appeared in the April 7, 1877 *New York Clipper*. It noted that E. D. Colvin was to be manager; George S. Cole, treasurer; Joel Warner, general agent; Eugene A. Weller, contracting agent; Claude Williams, press agent; James E. Cooke, equestrian director; William Organ, ring stock boss; J. C. White, menagerie superintendent and Harry Gise, boss canvas man.

According to the *Clipper* the performance was to include Signor Sebastian, somersaulting rider; Wooda Cooke, somersault and hurdle rider; Francois Victor, four horse rider; Mlle. Marie, juggler; Ella Kennebel, ménage rider; Mlle. Tournaire, trapeze; Mlle. Lauretta, tight rope and slack wire juggler and Herr Drayton, light and heavy balancing. The clowns were to be James E. Cooke, Kennebel brothers (3) and Sam Rinehart.



A lithograph used by Montgomery Queen, printed by the Buffalo Courier Company. Circus World Museum collection.

performance on each occasion was pronounced excellent and the plaudits of the spectators were frequently elicited by the extraordinary perfection to which several fine horses have been trained. They appear to do everything the ring-master commands them with that precision and tact to which untiring perseverance can alone bring the equine intelligence, Madam Atalie, designated on the program the female Samson, well deserves that soubriquet for she gives most striking evidence of her remarkable strength by lifting a ponderous cannon, carrying two men

There were to be three trick horses, performing elephants, performing lions, tigers and hyenas. The show would have twenty cages of animals including seven new ones. A large double horned rhinoceros was added to the menagerie a well as a horned horse.

The *Clipper* also noted that the street parade would be an attractive feature. In the procession would be the golden Great Pacific band chariot containing Emidy's British cornet band drawn by ten black horses, with silver plated English harnesses, followed by mounted knights and ladies in steel armor; elephants in silver housings; the Silver Car of Oberon, an open den of performing tigers; the tableau Car of Liberty, drawn by ten white horses, upon which will be presented living figures typical of the Army, Navy, Peace and Justice; followed a mounted body-guard of Continental soldiers; an open den of lions; the Golden Car of the Conqueror, drawn by a team of ten dromedaries; an open den of hyenas; a diminutive tableau car, drawn by twelve diminutive ponies. The drivers would have new costumes, banners an flags.

The season opened on April 2 in San Francisco where the show remained until April 22.

This review of the show appeared

Little Mollie Brown, the child rider. Pfening archives.



in a San Francisco newspaper on April 10: "THE CIRCUS AND MENAGERIE.

"A Brilliant Performance at Montgomery Queen's Circus and Menagerie Last Evening.

"Multitudinous as were the attractions for the amusement-loving public last evening, Montgomery Queen's Circus and Menagerie had a splendid audience. The programme of performances in the arena were varied throughout. The acts were of the very best and most interesting description. Without a doubt this is one of the finest circuses taken as a whole, with more first-class artists of

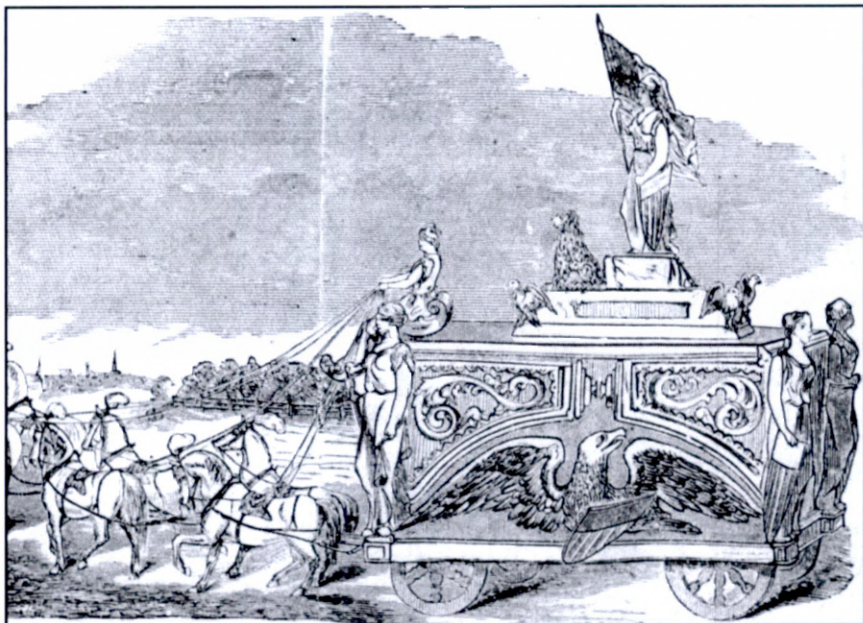
the highest talents that is performing before the public today in the United States. In no branch of the profession do their superiors exist. The beautiful entry of the Sports of Kenilworth, introducing sixty mounted knights and ladies, horses, camels, elephants and banner-men, was imposing, graceful and attractive. Mr. James Gallaghert's marvelous act on the crystal pyramids followed. Wm. Organ, the prince of animal trainers, and Sam Rinehart, the most natural of humorous clowns, then gave a comic act with two trick ponies, exciting admiration as well as continuous laughter.

"A thrilling sensational act upon the trapeze by Charles and Loline Belmont, exhibited nerve, grace and daring in an extraordinary degree. The lady, while hanging head downward from the trapeze, held a small trapeze in her hands, from which four men suspended themselves, the lower one meantime performing a number of feats. Woodie Cook, in his somersault riding, was sure and dar-

The front of the 1876 Queen courier was over-printed for use in 1877. Circus World Museum collection.

ing, turning a number of somersaults on the horses back while going around the ring at a rapid gait. Mr. James Cooke who was the clown of this act, had many a queer and quaint conceits and funny stories, that convulsed the monster audience into paroxysms of laughter. Mademoiselle Tournaire and Signor Sebastian's double act on two bareback horses was something entirely new. It inspired and intense admiration for its daring and both clever artists were repeated. applauded. Miss Ellen Cooke, a beautifully formed and graceful of horsemanship flying through balloons and leaping banners without halt or miss.

"The Queen of the Air, Mademoiselle Tournaire, performed her fearful act upon the flying trapeze, stamping herself as the greatest equilibrists in the world. Signor Sebastian, the first of living bareback



The Triumph of Liberty tableau on Montgomery Queen, Circus World Museum collection.

riders, exhibited exciting feats of horsemanship, riding bareback and thrilling his audience into an exstey (sic) of applause. The comic Kuneebels in a side-splitting act and Herr Drayton's marvelous manipulations of the heavy iron cannon balls won unstinted and loudly expressed approbation. The exhibition of the method by which circus riders are taught their profession was full of fun and moving incidents and was productive of the most hilarious laughter.

"The military spectacle of Putnam, or the Iron Son of '76, fittingly concluded one of the most interesting of circus entertainments ever witnessed in this city. The spectacle, considering the limited scope that the circus ring affords for dramatic purposes, was superbly done. Introducing several beautiful horses of the stud and all the members of the company. It surpassed any previous attempt in that direction. A gorgeous tableau of George Washington seated upon his horse while being borne around the ring on the shoulders of his countrymen, was patriotic, effective and brilliant. The acting of the various characters was excellent. We are sure that this spectacle will prove to be a magnificent popular success.

"For an hour before the commence-

ment of the performance and long afterward the audience wandered through the large and thoroughly complete menagerie admiring its curiosities. Two performances are given daily, at 2 and 8 P. M."

Then Queen played Redwood, Gilroy, Hollister, Watsonville and Salinas and was in Santa Clara on April 30. It was in Oakland on May 3 and 4.

Los Angeles was played May 7 to 9; Sacramento was shown on May 21-22. Working its way east it was in Cheyenne, Wyoming on July 10 and Denver, Colorado May 11 and 12. Five stands were in Nebraska July 23 to 27. Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado and Nebraska followed.

Peoria, Illinois was shown on July 30. Toledo, Ohio was the August 10

date. A number of dates in September were in Michigan and Indiana. After stands in Indiana and Illinois Queen opened in St. Louis, Missouri on October 22 for a six day stand. The circus closed after the St. Louis engagement and was shipped to winter quarters in Louisville, Kentucky.

During his years as a circus owner Queen had been for the most part financially successful and he improved his equipment each year. The 1877 San Francisco opening was a financial success. However, soon after the opening stand Queen's attitude and actions changed and his actions indicated what appears to have been a total lack of interest in the operation of his circus. As the show headed east he would leave suddenly and then would return without giving any explanation. He failed to account for large sums of money; creditors were put off.

When he was on the show he would cause problems by over-riding the actions of his staff.

Surprisingly the show made money in spite of Queen's strange behavior. He paid little attention to the operation and became a mediocre manager. He paid no attention to the performance or the appearance of the circus on the lot.

This soon led to serious problems, bringing disorganization and poor management. The show began to look bad on the lot. Somehow it remained

The Queen wagon was called the Eagle tableau on Sells. Bros. Circus. Pfening Archives.



on the road until October when the debt-ridden show was taken over by creditors who sent the animals and equipment to Louisville, Kentucky.

Manager Calude Williams opened the quarters for charitable benefits with success. Late in the fall show property was sold off one by one.

On February 13, 1878 Queen filed a voluntary petition in bankruptcy in St. Louis, Missouri. His liabilities amount to \$166,000 and the nominal assets were \$31,223.

A large number of the creditors were performers and a considerable amount was due for printing and money loans. The largest secured creditors were E. D. Colvin, assistant manager, \$6,525; George S. Cole, treasurer, \$3,532; James Cook, clown, \$1,164; John S. Strickland, boss hostler, \$700; Woodie Cook, rider, \$630; Buffalo Courier Company, \$18,000 and James How, \$8,991.

The unsecured creditors were, George H. Douglas, \$24,000; Robert G. Denegan, \$22,000; George H. Burnett, \$17,250; James H. English, \$15,250; James S. Wilson, \$12,500; Joseph Lockburrow, \$8,500 and Wells, Fargo and Company, \$5,300. This group may have loaned money to Queen.

The assets consisted mostly of stock valued at \$30,000, in St. Louis; subject to a chattel mortgage and bill of sale.

Among the animals were a hippopotamus, an elephant, two dogs, two leopards, a striped hyena, four spotted hyenas, two young lions, a sacred cow, one zebra, one porcupine, one African wild boar, six monkeys, twenty assorted birds, ten kangaroos, a lioness, eight camels, one Bengal tiger, a horned horse, a rhinoceros and trick horses.

The Buffalo Courier Company, being owed \$18,000 for lithographs forced an auction that was held at the winter quarters in Louisville on February 21, 1878.

This report of the Queen auction appeared in the February 21, 1878 edition of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*.



A lithograph used by Montgomery Queen, printed by the Buffalo Courier Company. Circus World Museum collection.

"The sale by auction of Montgomery Queen Circus and Menageries announced in the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, took place at the Exposition building. Mr. Sam Meddas of Meddas & Southwick, officiating.

"A number of the most prominent showmen of the country were present, among them the following: George F. Bailey of the Barnum combination; Old John Robinson of Cincinnati; W. W. Cole of Chicago; A. E. Sells of Columbus, Ohio; E. Wiggins of Detroit, Michigan.

"W. R. Haydun of Cole's Great Eastern Circus; Huntington Hilliard of the United States Circus; Fred H. Bayley of Cincinnati; J. H. Bayley of O'Brien's Circus; C. R. Cohen of Queen's Circus; Col. A. O. Russell of Cincinnati and T. P. King of St. Louis.

"As the hour of the sale drew near, the exposition building became crowded with people, all anxious to get a glimpse of the animals. According to the program, the costumes, properties, harness of the circus, were first sold, after which Mr. Meddas, the auctioneer, proceeded to the sale of the animals. Before going into the room in which the animals were kept, he said it would be impossible to accommodate all present, with a sight of the pets, as the room was not large, enough, to handle all, so he asked that only buyers should

go in. This arrangement proved anything but satisfactory to the majority of those present, who had, waited patiently all the morning for the event.

"Below is a full report of every animal sold, and the amount paid for each: 1-Eland, \$205; 1-Zebra, \$220; 1-White deer, \$20; 3-Gazelle, \$25, each; 1-Lion and lioness, \$100, each; 1-pair cub lions, \$50, each; 2-Leopards, \$65, each; 1-Leopard, \$25; 1-Pair of tigers, \$80 each; 2-California lions, \$130, each; 4-Hyenas, \$21 each; 1-Wild Boar, \$5; 3-Kangaroos, \$82 each; 1-Warthog, \$190; 1-Wolf, \$7; 2-Badgers, \$5 each; 1-Monkey, \$105; 2-Monkeys, \$82 each; 2-Cuckatoos, \$13 each; 1-Elephant, \$1,500; 1-Camel, \$180; 2-Camels, \$270 each; 6-camels, \$80 each; 1-Two-horned rhinoceros, \$3,000; 1-Horned horse, \$675; 1-Sacred cow, \$32; 1-Royal tiger, \$600; 1-Emu, \$100.

"The largest purchasers were the Sells Bros. of Columbus, Ohio, and probably W. W. Cole of Chicago.

"The St. Louis Zoological Gardens bought very liberally. Burr Robbins, Old John Robinson, James Whalen, George F. Bailey of Barnum's Circus, and T. P. King of St. Louis were the other principal purchasers.

"Sells Bros. bought the rhinoceros, a Bengal tiger, the horned horse, eight camels and dromedaries, two monkeys and a white deer.

"W. W. Cole bought a zebra, lion and lioness, the elephant, an emu, cockatoos and two monkeys.

"Burr Robbins bought the hyenas, kangaroos, wart hog, scared cow, a leopard and the eland.

"The St Louis Zoological Gardens bought two gazelles, cub lions, California lions and the tiger cat.

"Old John Robinson bought two leopards.

"Mr. Bailey bought the badgers.

"Mr. Fitch bought the performing monkey at \$100.

"The horses and ponies to be sold at a later date.

"It is understood that Montgomery Queen, proprietor of the California Circus and Menagerie filed a voluntary petition for bankruptcy before

Register Dwight of New York. His liabilities are said to amount to \$166,000 and the nominal assets of \$31,233.

"The sale took place under the supervision of C. H. McCune of the Buffalo Courier Co., whose secured claim of \$18,000 was made doubly secured by attachment.

"The circus equipment brought about \$5,000. All of it was at tremendously low prices.

"Sells Bros. bought some costumes for \$200 that originally cost \$1,500. A \$250 blanket for the elephant was sold for \$5, and 14 horse trappings worth \$10 each, brought \$5 for the lot. A \$50 bass drum went for \$2. Many saddles were sold for \$2 each. Sixty yards of Brussels carpet sold for 25 cents per yard.

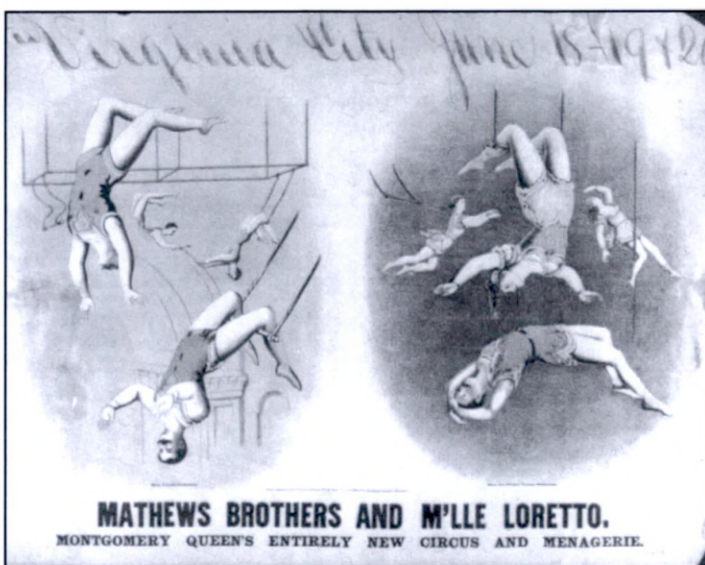
"John Robinson of Cincinnati bought a pair of hyenas at \$21 each; one giraffe cage for \$185 and six other cages at about \$100 each.

"George F. Bailey (agent for P. T. Barnum) bought 2 badgers at \$5.00 each; 2 monkeys at \$31.00 each; 4 horses that did the horse act for \$170 each; 10-horses at about \$80 each and 1 elk at \$20.

"The Sells Bros. bought a 2-horned African rhinoceros for \$3600; 1-horned horse \$675; 1-Royal Bengal tiger for \$600; 8-camels, at \$130, \$260 and \$110 each; The balance at \$80 each; a tableaux parade wagon and a large amount of wardrobe.

"W. W. Cole of St. Louis bought 1 zebra at \$230; 1 lion & lioness at \$200; 2-kangaroos for \$82.00 each; 1-wild boar \$5; 1-elephant (Llala Rookh) \$1500; 1-sacred cow \$21; 2-monkeys for \$21 each; the spotted trick horse 'Humboldt' \$280 and the famous trick pony 'Dick' for \$175. This pony was \$1000; 1-African Emu, \$100; 18-cockatoos \$13 each. As well as a performing animal den and a ticket wagon \$300.

"Burr Robbins of Janesville, Wisconsin bought 1-African eland \$295; 1-white deer \$20; 1-wart hog \$1.90; 3-hyenas at \$21 each; one pair of cub lions at \$50. each; 1-leopard, \$55; 5-ponies averaging \$110 each;



A lithograph used by Montgomery Queen, printed by the Buffalo Courier Company. Circus World Museum collection.

the entire wardrobe for the play of 'Putnam' for \$20, cost \$1000.

"The St. Louis Zoological Garden purchased 1 pair of tiger cats for \$30 each and 1 pair of California mountain lions for \$150 each.

"Charles Ritchie of New York bought 1 monkey for \$100. The animals and properties, wardrobe and dens brought \$14,666, and the horses and ponies \$4,248.50. The original cost of the entire show was about \$86,000.

"The Montgomery Queen organization came to Louisville to go into winter quarters in the latter part of October 1877, soon after the close of the exposition. The building was so changed as to make their quarters comfortable. The animals seemed to be in good condition and quite at home. Two cub lions and two cub tigers were born just before the arrival at quarters."

The only one tableaux wagon, a giraffe cage, one animal cage and a ticket wagon were listed in the sale.

The Fielding bandwagon and other elaborate parade tableaux were not mentioned. Nor was there any reference to tents and seating. These items had been sold prior to the auction.

The Queen tableaux known as Triumph of Liberty was bought by the Sells brothers and was used on that show and Forepaugh-Sells until the show closed in 1907. The fifteen foot long wagon was called the Eagle tableaux while on Sells. Follow-

ing the discontinuance of Forepaugh-Sells in 1907 the wagon was sold to Frank A. Robbins and is the only Queen equipment identified on another circus.

After the circus closed Montgomery Queen returned to Brooklyn and opened a livery stable on Franklin Street which he operated until about 1891, when he retired. He was not further seen by circus people.

A burial certificate located in Brooklyn, New York stated that he died on September 13, 1901, at his residence there at 678 DeKalb Avenue, at the age of 79 years and 11 months. Queen was buried in Greenwood Cemetery, in New York.

The remains of old Queen wagons were found behind a hotel in Haywards, California as late as 1937.

Elmer Jones revived the Montgomery Queen title on a two car circus from 1910 to 1912.

Some information for this article was provided by John Polacsek and the Circus World Museum.

Letterhead used by Elmer Jones' Montgomery Queen Circus 1910-1912. Pfening Archives.



The Walleth Family of Principal Riders

By John Daniel Draper

Among numerous performers who for more than a century were remembered by circus audiences in both England and America were the Walleths. Prior to 1850 William Frederick Walleth (1808-1892), clown, jester and public entertainer, was so well known in England that he was popularized in a book as the "Queen's Jester." The story was told that while he was with an English circus, lion cubs had been born on the show. When Queen Victoria asked to see the cubs, the management picked Walleth to take them to her because he had a classical education and a pleasing personality. He had learned that the Queen was a Shakespearean devotee and so in talking with her about the cubs he brought in Shakespearean quips and quotes. As he prepared to leave, she dubbed him a, Sir.¹

Because of the publicity related to his ability to gain royal favor, Walleth was selected as a member of a company which was engaged for a season at Franconi's in Paris as well as at Le Cirque Nationale in Brussels. He was on the same bill as members of the Tourniaire family and Mons. Benoit, the equestrian. For the 1850 season James M. June & Co. engaged Walleth to exhibit in America. His London popularity was duplicated in the States and in Canada. Before returning to England in 1858, he had appeared with among others Spalding & Rogers at New Orleans (winter of 1850-1851), Dan Rice (1852) and the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia (1852). On his returning to England he joined Howes & Cushing at their Alhambra Palace engagement in London. After a provincial tour and appearances throughout Europe, he made a second visit to America in the mid 1860's. At various times he appeared on Adam Forepaugh, P. T. Barnum and Barnum & Bailey as well as at the American Theatre in Philadel-

phia. He developed an intellectual style of recitation both in prose and poetry which initiated an American tradition for Shakespearean clowns. He eventually retired in England where he died at Beeston.

In the meanwhile, a nephew, William Frederick Walleth, II, was born in England in 1871. He was to become a star equestrian whose early career in America can be followed in the programs of Adam Forepaugh, Barnum & Bailey and Adam Forepaugh Sells.

It is not clear from whom he learned his equestrian skills in England. He was brought to this country by James A. Bailey about 1890 and as early as March of that year he had an "at liberty ad" in the New York *Clipper* stating "Late of Circus Renz, Berlin, Germany, English jockey and hurdle rider, Henderson, North Carolina."

William F. Walleth, II was a brother of Ada Walleth, the wife of Dave

Castello. Because of this relationship, Dave Castello, Sr.'s children were first cousins of the Walleths. It was also probably because Dave and Ada Walleth Castello had early connections at Henderson, North Carolina that Walleth gave that town as his first address in America.

In 1891 he held a prominent position among the older and better known riders in bareback jockey riding, somersault and trick bareback riding and two horse Roman standing riding on the hippodrome track. That year he appeared along with the likes of Fred Watson, Robert Whittaker, the Reed sisters, John L. Davenport, Jr. and William Marks. The following year he had added leaping and tumbling to his accomplishments and by 1893 he had the title "Rider supreme, the man who rides." In the customary manner of the times, Adam Forepaugh challenged the world to produce his equal.

After the 1894 season, Walleth sailed for England for the winter. Back in America in 1895 and while on Barnum & Bailey, he married Florence, a member of the Flying Dillons, a casting act in which she was a leaper. This troupe had been brought to America from England by James A. Bailey about the same time as he had initially arrived here.

In 1896 and 1897 while on Adam Forepaugh-Sells Bros., Florence Walleth was the aerial trapeze queen while William did his bareback somersaults and his bounding jockey act. During the 1897 season he did a brilliant steeple chase bareback hurdle act. By early in 1898 Florence had learned some equestrian skills and was riding with her husband in a double bareback jockey act on Walter L. Main. He also did a principal act and she was a trapeze performer. Later that year they were in England with Barnum & Bailey for the great five season tour. At Olympia in 1898-



William Frederick Walleth, the English clown. E. C. May, Circus World Museum collection.

1899 William was proclaimed the "World famous champion bareback rider, a most remarkable and versatile arenic artist." He was the "recognized champion principal trick bareback equestrian and admittedly great jockey act rider in whose thoroughly original act" he was a "brave and dashing performer while costumed as Mephisto, actually clinging to the crupper, leaping simultaneously while his spirited horse jumped fire bars and gates." It was a "thrilling exploit heroically performed with the introduction of many clever originalities." He was a "skillful horseman whose every motion and pace denotes greatest and most perfect practice."²

In London in 1899 the Walleys did their double jockey bareback act, which was continued through 1901 as the show progressed over the continent including Vienna and the Netherlands. William was also riding his thrilling principal act. In 1902 he introduced his high school horse act.

William Walleys opened with Barnum & Bailey at Madison Square Garden in 1903. He was one of three great principal bareback riders, the others being Fred Derrick and Wilkes Lloyd. Bareback bounding jockey acts were ridden by Lloyd, Walleys and Mlle. Hodgini and Victor Bedini. On the road William's performance in Display #5 was described in the official program as an "unapproachable champion bareback act" and in Display #15 as the "most unique and finished jockey equestrian act ever seen; finished and most perfect champion bareback equestrian jockey act, concluding with breath taking ride around the racing track, jumping high hurdles while holding by crupper alone--Misses Ella Bradna and Amelia Feeley; Messrs. William Walleys and Fred Derrick."³ Later in the season in September the Walleys were appearing on Ringling Bros. in Oakland, California.

The following season at Madison Square Garden with Barnum and Bailey William Walleys, John Rooney and Wilkes Lloyd were riding unparalleled champion principal bareback acts with both backward and forward somersaults. Also William was in a double jockey equestrian act with Fred Derrick in one of two such presentations.

Cirque MacCaddon was in France in 1905 where William Walleys rode "haute ecole" and "voltige a dos de cheval" and was proclaimed the king of high school riders and of the backward somersaults on horseback.⁴

The 1907 season on Adam Forepaugh & Sells Bros. was Walleys's last appearance as a rider on one of the larger circuses. In Display #13 he did a double riding specialty with May Davenport.

Beginning in 1909 and for the next thirteen years the Walleys were on a different show almost every year. In 1909 it was Fred Buchanan's Yankee Robinson Circus where young William Frederick, Jr., the 11 year old son, joined his father in a carrying act in addition to the father's principal act. Walleys also did a Pete Jenkins act. On the show that year Linda Jeal Julian rode a principal and hurdle act, the Crooks Bros. (Charlie and Barney) did principal acts and mule hurdles, Al Bishop had a January mule and for part of the season Jack Cousins was the equestrian director.

Howe's Great London Shows opened on March 28, 1910 at Jacksonville, Florida and Walleys as a champion bareback rider came in for his share of praise as he held the attention of the crowds from start to finish. William O'Dale served as the equestrian director.

William Walleys and family were featured on Gollmar Bros. in 1911. Mrs. Florence Walleys did an aerial combination act as well as a carrying and jockey act. Master Willie performed on the Roman rings, was in a carrying act and also did tumbling and clowning. The eldest daughter, Rose, did Roman rings and was in a carrying act. In the latter, William and Florence were standing riders. She was in a long gown and held Willie on her shoulders while William held Rose on his shoulders. Mounted in this manner they rode Roman style.⁵ In addition both

Francis Reed and William were principal standing riders. Francis Reed also appeared in a featured carrying act with Bessie Lane.

Walleys, his wife and three of their six children had an important role in the Mighty Haag Show program for 1912. In the family carrying act the father stood Roman style on two horses, Willie (age 14) stood on his shoulders and daughters, Rose (age 13), and Florence (age 11) each stood with one foot on his upper legs. The boy waved two flags and the girls each waved one flag with their free hands. This pose is shown in art work in a newspaper ad for Marshall, Texas, Thursday, April 10, 1912, which also mentions that Haag features his band and that Nellie King, "premier lady cornetist of America,"

had been secured for solos. The Walleys cut also was used for special paper.⁶

A Walleys poster from the 1913 Sun Bros. Circus route book. Pfening Archives.

Besides the big carrying act, Walleys did a principal and jockey riding act in one ring and Rose did the same type of riding act in another ring, working simultaneously.

Her sister, Florence, did swinging ladder and Roman rings. Rose also worked in the latter act with Florence, doing a sort of iron-jaw in which Rose held Florence, suspended by her teeth, on a swivel with Florence revolving.

Mighty Haag was on rails that year. Starting in Shreveport, Louisiana on March 21, 1912, it traveled all the way to Prince Edward Island in Canada and returned to Atlanta, Texas in 270 consecutive days. When it closed on November 30, Walleys accompanied his horses back to Henderson and sent the children home alone on a passenger train. The children stopped at a hotel in Raleigh where one room was obtained for the two girls and one for



Willie. Soon after retiring, Willie came to the girl's room and knocked on the door. He exclaimed: "I am the man in this party and to protect you girls I am going to sleep in your bed," He then piled in with Rose and Florence, too scared to sleep alone.⁷

In 1913 and 1914 the Walleys were on Sun Bros. Circus. For 1913 the family dominated the program offerings. By this time there were seven children on the show: Willie, Rose, Florence, Bonnie, Freddie, Josephine and Alice. Six of them with their silk parasols presented an attractive low wire act. In their equestrian offerings they were introduced as a family of celebrated English riders from the Hippodrome, London, England. William rode on two horses Roman style with a daughter on each hip and Willie on his shoulders, all waving British flags. This offering was similar to the one on Mighty Haag in the previous year. Rose as well as her father rode an outstanding principal act. Mrs. Wallett had a new novel sensational combination aerial act which terminated in a giant pedal swing forming a thrilling feature attraction.⁸ William Wallett was equestrian director in 1913 as well as in 1914.

In the latter year the "Eight Peerless Walleys" did equestrian, wire and trapeze acts. Portrayed on a herald was the Wallett novelty act with a four wheel buggy and two horses with a lady and gentleman doing standing riding and a carrying act.

Jones Bros. World Toured Shows claimed the talent of the Walleys in 1915. Among other offerings, little six year old Alice walked the low wire and the family worked on a balancing ladder.

Initially in 1916 William F. Wallett was the equestrian director on Merkle's River Shows. However, later in the year when Wheeler Bros. Enormous Shows closed its rail tour and organized as a wagon show, the Wallett Family names were on the roster.

Again in 1917 William F. Wallett and family appeared on two different shows. In March, even before it opened, they were scheduled to be on Cook Bros. Circus. William was equestrian director and with his family presented riding and wire acts as

leading attractions. Late that season, the Eight Riding Walleys (father and mother with Rose, Florence, Josephine, Alice, Will and Fred) joined Andrew Downie's La Tena Wild Animal Circus. At the season's closing William was the equestrian director. That winter the family resided in Havre de Grace, Maryland. This small town at the mouth of the Susquehanna River was the winter quarters for Andrew Downie and became the new hometown for the Walleys.

Downie's Walter L. Main Circus claimed the attention of the family in 1918. In Display #5, Ring 1 was the bareback trick principal act of Eunice De Mott and in Ring 2 Rose Wallett did an identical act. Display #11 offered the bareback trick somersault riding of Melvin Hollis and William Wallett in Ring 1 and Ring 2, respectively. Display #15 had the two horse carrying acts of the De Motts in Ring 1 and the Walleys in Ring 2. In each of these displays clowns cavorted on the center stage.⁹

Early in 1919 William F. Wallett and his daughter, Rose, went to Mexico to present equestrian acts on circuses there.

Rose Wallett and her father were on Howe's Great London Shows in 1920 where they were joined by her brother, Willie. That year Winnie Sweeney and Rose rode principal acts as well as William.¹⁰ After spending the winter at their home, the Walleys returned in the spring of 1921 for a second season on the show.

That year the title was changed to Howe's Great London Circus & Van Amburg's Trained Wild Animals. In display #6 there were "marvelous lady bareback riders in feats of horsemanship--Rose Wallett and Winnie Sweeney--in jumping and acrobatic equitation, dashing and daring riding by two of America's greatest exponents of horsemanship, a most beautiful and altogether delightful display of color and charm, an exhibition of clever and finished equestrianism. In Display #14 William F. Wallett introduced "sensa-

tional and unique feats of horsemanship" in his principal act. Later, father, daughter and son, as three of sixteen manege riders, presented high jumping horses and high school riding at its best.¹¹

Early in January of 1922 Mrs. Fanny Wallett died at her home in Henderson, North Carolina. Aged 79, she was the mother of both W. F. Wallett and Ada Wallett Castello, wife of Dave Castello, Sr and grandmother of Edith Walton. She had made her home with the David Castellos. Born in England, she had been a famous wire walker in earlier years.

That year the Wallett family, including W. F. Wallett, Rose and Willie, again appeared on Walter L. Main Circus. Charles Sweeney was the equestrian director and his wife, Winnie, again rode in the performance.¹² In November Rose married Leo Kearns, manager of the International Seven Act, an acrobatic troupe with the show. The Wallett family was now established in a nice home in Havre de Grace and Mrs. Florence Wallett, having retired from the circus ring, was proprietor of a grocery store down near the railroad depot. Her husband with daughter Rose was busy breaking an act for the next season. His old reliable ring horse was still in good condition.

Over the winter and into 1923 Rose and her new husband were in vaudeville and were meeting with great success with their indoor circus acts. The following March William

Wallett, Rose and Leo Kerns, with their horses, sailed from New York City for Buenos Aires where they were scheduled to appear with the Frank Brown Circus.

Rose Wallett on Howe's Great London in 1921. Pfening Archives.



After a successful South American tour, Rose was back in Havre de Grace in September of 1923 to visit her mother. Willie remained in South America to work one of the Stafford dog & pony acts in vaudeville. William, Sr. returned to Havre de Grace, bringing only one horse. The

other one he left with Brown. He planned to frame two single riding acts, Rose to be featured in one of them. Her husband went to New York to put together a new acrobatic act on the order of the International Seven.

In December, Willie, manager of Stafford's Comedy Animal Circus, arrived in Boston with his troupe on the steamer *Commack* after a good tour of Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. He had been out of the country for eleven months. After some engagements with the Brown organization, he had made a tour of the vaudeville circuit in South America. While there he came across the Flying Dunbars who were operating an American circus. Appearing with them was Capt. Schwyer and his lions.

On February 3, 1925 Willie Wallelt was married to Margaret Scobe of Havre de Grace. He was then listing himself as Capt. W. F. Wallelt, Jr., horse breaker, trainer and former equestrian. By the end of 1926 he was breaking two rosin backs and a hurdle mule for Hunt Bros. Circus.

In 1927, after early dates playing indoor engagements on Downie Bros. with the Riding Rooneys, for the next five regular seasons through 1931 William F. Wallelt, Jr. would appear on Hunt Bros. as a rider, horse trainer and equestrian director. In addition to presenting riding dogs and monkeys, Willie headed the Riding Walleltts, a classy four person comedy riding act which featured his somersault riding. Evelyn Wood was a member of this troupe. On the show there were also lady and gentleman principal acts by Hazel Williams and Will. On October 12 of that year his sister, Florence, married Dr. Holmes Fielding Troutman, The Troutmans eventually settled in Huntington, West Virginia.

After the close of his vaudeville and minstrel engagements in March 1928, Willie took some time to rest at his father's home in Havre de Grace. Soon after, he arrived at Hunt Bros.' Pikesville, Maryland quarters to break another horse for use in a four person comedy riding number. Other members of this act were a niece of the Hunts, Hazel Williams, and 27 year old Charles Hunt. That season,



The Billy Wallelt troupe on Hunt Bros. Circus in 1928. Circus World Museum collection.

in addition to his riding act, Will also presented a hurdle mule act. The Hunt show was quite small at that time. It had a 75 foot big top with 2-30's and 1-40 with only 700 seats.

Hazel Williams was again with the Riding Wallelt act in 1929. On March 22 Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Wallelt, Jr. announced the birth of an eight and one half pound son.

The next season the Riding Walleltts, with Charley the riding clown and Hazel Williams, were featured in their fourth year on the show. Charles Robinson did some singing during part of the act. Willie again did the mule hurdle and there was also a liberty act. By this time the Hunt seating capacity had been increased to 1200.

W. F. Wallelt, Sr. passed away on June 5, 1930 in his berth on the Hagenbeck-Wallace train as it was pulling into Kalamazoo, Michigan. Death was due to an "affection" of the heart, induced by asthma. He was 59 years old and had traveled with tent shows since he was two years old. He had retired from the arena eight years previously after the 1922 season. In 1930 he was acting as ringmaster for Rose Wallelt, who was riding on Hagenbeck-Wallace. Interment was in Henderson, North Carolina. He was survived by three other daughters and three sons as well as his widow.

In the fall, at the close of Hunt Bros. season, Willie visited Mr. & Mrs. George Hanneford at their home at Lake George in the Adirondacks. Ernest Clarke and his family as well as Percy Clarke and Otto Griebeling were also visiting there. Ernest Clarke and Wallelt took time to do some hunting. After this visit, Wallelt went into vaudeville with the George Hannefords, Poodles and his wife and their mother.

Opening in 1931 at Pikesville, Maryland, Hunt Bros. again featured the Riding Walleltts with Charley, the Riding Boob. Willie presented the mule hurdle and one of the three pony drills. He was assisted in his equestrian director responsibilities by Eddie Traceman. In February Rose Wallelt was one of three female principal riders at the Detroit Shrine circus.

William Wallelt, Jr. joined Downie Bros. Circus in 1932 where he was a principal rider and was also a member of the George Hanneford riding troupe. The show, somewhat larger than Hunt Bros., that year had a 110 foot round big top with 3-40's and a herd of five elephants.

Rose Wallelt, with the Orrin Davenport act, was a featured rider on Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey. Her father had taught her to ride when she was only six years of age and she had come a long way in developing her artistic skills. It will be recalled that her husband, Leo Kerns, was an acrobat, leaper and clown.

Rose and her husband and the Davenport Troupe appeared again on Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey in 1933. Meanwhile, that year, the Wallelt bareback riding troupe featuring Will, the riding comedian, joined Barnett Bros. Circus.

The sensational Will Wallelt Troupe of riders next appeared on Seils-Sterling for the seasons of 1934, 1935 and 1938. Willie in 1934 starred as a blackface female comedian. The five person troupe was comprised of three women and two men. The other members were Orval Lindeman, Mrs. Lindeman (Verna), Rose Heller, wife of bandmaster Art Heller, and Mrs. Nathalia, Miller Schrader (Nellie). This was one of a number of years that Hal Silver, later

the great Hubert Castle of wire walking fame, was on this show. The big top was 100 round with 4-35's. That year Rose Walleth did a principal riding act at the Canton, Ohio Tadmor Temple Shrine Circus.

The next season Will Walleth with his troupe played the Detroit and Cleveland Shrine shows before rejoining Seils-Sterling. The members of the troupe were essentially the same as in the previous year. On the first day of the season Orval Lindeman incurred a significant injury. Later in the summer Will was out for almost a month due to a more serious injury. Walleth was available to substitute at times as equestrian director in place of Bert Mayo. Rose repeated with her principal riding act at the Canton Shrine Circus for 1935 and at the Detroit Shrine, that year, she was one of three female principal riders as well as a member of the five person Joe Hodgini riding act.

In 1936 and 1937 the Hodgini Bros. riding act replaced the Will Walleth Troupe on Seils-Sterling. These brothers, Joe and Ted, were nephews of Joe Hodgini, Sr. In 1936 their troupe included Verna Lindeman, Rose Heller and Nellie Schrader. The clowning was done by Joe Hodgini. In addition to her role in the big riding act, Nellie Schrader also did a principal act and performed on the flying ladders. Her husband, Leroy, presented dogs and liberty ponies. The big top performance was now under a 120 plus 4-50's.

The 1937 Hodgini riding act included Orval Lindeman in addition to all the members from the previous year and also, according to some accounts, Caroline Hodgini a sister of the Hodgini brothers. Riding manege that year were Nellie Schrader, Fred Leonard, Vivian Knuffnian, Bette Leonard, Verna Lindeman, Rose Heller and Shirley Lindeman. Hal Silver was still performing on the show.

The Hodgini-Davenport Troupe was featured on Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1937. It was composed of Joe Hodgini, Sr. and his wife Etta, Ethel and Freddie Freeman, Tommy Hodgini and Rose Walleth. Although



The Will Walleth riders on Seils-Sterling in 1934. Circus World Museum collection.

the Davenport name was attached to this act, no members of the Davenport family appeared in it. However, Orrin Davenport that year was equestrian director of Hagenbeck-Wallace. Rose Walleth also rode in one of two principal acts opposite Etta Hodgini.

Will Walleth was back on Seils-Sterling in 1938 in his role of the black face riding comedian. Willie as the "May West of the White Tops" rode with another man, probably Orval Lindeman, and three women in a featured act.¹³ The show that year featured Art Mix, Premier Western Screen Star, the King of the Cowboys. In newspaper ads his first name was printed in very small letters and MIX in very large letters, giving the impression that they were talking about Tom Mix. The 1938 season was very short. Seils-Sterling opened at Aurora, Missouri on April 23d and closed at Iron Mountain, Michigan on July 14th. The show was sold at auction on September 19, 1938 at Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

Rose Walleth that year, in addition to being one of two lady principal riders on Murat Temple Shrine Circus in Indianapolis and on Medinah Temple Shrine Circus in Chicago, also rode on Cole Bros. Circus and Robbins Bros. Circus. Early in the season on Cole Bros. at the Chicago date, as a principal rider she shared honors with Bessie Hollis and Juanita Hobson. In the late season on Robbins Bros. she was billed in the center ring as a peerless

European rider in unusual equestrian feats opposite Georgia Sweet and Juanita Hobson.¹⁴

The following season Rose was again a principal rider on the Medinah Temple Shrine Circus. In April Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Walleth, Jr. were blessed by the birth of a second son. A note of sorrow was interjected by the death of Mrs. Florence Walleth, Sr. on May 2 at Havre de Grace. A performer from the age of eight, she had come to America as an aerialist many years before. She had trouped for 38 years and was survived by four daughters and two sons, all performers.

Only two other references were found concerning the Walleths. In May and June of 1943 Mrs. W. F. Walleth, Jr. and son, Billy, attended the Hunt Bros. opening at Somerville, New Jersey and also the Beers-Barnes opening. At that time she and her husband were operating a restaurant and catering service in Havre de Grace.

On February 18, 1968 W. F. Walleth, Jr. died at the age of 69. A native of Henderson, North Carolina, in addition to his circus activities, he had once served on the city council of Havre de Grace. He was survived by his widow, his children and several sisters and brothers. His sister, Rose Walleth Kerns, born on October 25, 1899, died in October of 1972.

Notes

1. Troutman, H. F., correspondence, December 31, 1951 (CWM). (Dr. Troutman was the husband of Florence Walleth, daughter of W. F. Walleth II.)
2. Barnum & Bailey, program, Olympia, 1898-99
3. Barnum & Bailey, program, 1903
4. Cirque MacCaddon, program, 1905
5. *Billboard*, April 15, 1911, p. 67
6. Mighty Haag Shows, route book, 1912
7. Troutman, H. F., undated notes (CWM)
8. Sun Bros. Circus, route book, 1913
9. *Billboard*, April 18, 1918, p. 31
10. Circus Historical Society notes, December 15, 1945 (CWM)
11. Howe's Great London Circus, program, 1921
12. Walter L. Main Circus, route book, 1922
13. Seils-Sterling Circus, herald, 1938
14. Robbins Bros. Circus, program, 1938

Almost fifty years under the big top- But still only fifty feet ahead of the sheriff

PART ONE

By C. A. "Red" Sonnenberg

This book is written in the language of the grift circus, the circus lots after World War I, no Hollywood phrases-no Barkers only Talkers-no Co-lie-o-peas only Ca-lee-opes (Calliopes) anyone pronouncing Calliope Co-Lie-O-Pea surely was never with a circus that had one. In the language of the average laymen, who would say for instance, "Wilbur left or Wilbur dies" appeared not so the circus man who would say, "Wilbur took it on the Arthur Duffy" or "Wilbur took a Powder" or "Wilbur took it on the Arkadelphia" and to continue it further "Wilbur blew," they all had the same meaning, but then whoever heard of a fella named Wilbur around a circus, it would likely be "Low down Red or Cop and Blow Shorty."

Never Smarten Up A Sucker

Zack Terrell used to crack. "Looking at one of those gas buggy circuses [truck shows] is like reading yesterday's newspaper."

Tex Dabnoy, who was writing sheet on the Walter L. Main Circus would go downtown just before parade time and set up his trap. One day down yonder Tex saw a farmer driving a team of mules hitched to a wagon. Tex snatched up a map that he used as a premium and wildly waving the map he rushed on to the on to the street and yelled, "Hey did you can one yet?" Without stopping his of mules Mister Hayseed answered, "Nope just toss it in the wagon. I'll look at it when I git home."

In a small town in South Dakota, a farmer came on the lot of Fred Buchanan's Robbins Bros. Circus with a lawyer who was the farmer's son-in-law with a phony claim for \$500. The shyster

Carl August "Red" Sonnenberg was a most unusual person, one who showed great compassion while on the surface always playing the role of a Rough, Tough show bum. But underneath he was a kind hearted understanding man, with great warmth and love.

He was born in Kenosha, Wisconsin on April 10, 1898. His career in the circus business started in his teens. He was mostly connected with the concession side of the business. He owned the concessions on the Russell Bros. Pan Pacific Circus in 1945, and was connected with Art Concello on various circuses. He closed his sawdust career as the long time on the road program manager with Ringing-Barnum.

Red was a long time member of the stagehands union, and worked the winter season as a theater stagehand and was often listed in theater rosters as Master Carpenter.

In his retirement years he recorded his experiences with circus people in what he hoped to be published as a book. At long last it will be published in the *Bandwagon*.

Red Sonnenberg was the most interesting and warm person I ever met in the circus business. He died on December 15, 1973. Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

cracked to Fred, "If this claim isn't settled at once I am going to attach the show." Fred cracked "you and your hick father-in-law ever been in

Red Sonnenberg at Showfolks of Sarasota in 1972. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.



the circus biz?" The shyster shook his noggin' and said, "No I haven't been in the circus business." "Have you?" asked Fred, as he looked the farmer smack dab in his kisser, "No I haven't either," he answered. "Well," answered Fred. "You sure as hell will be if you attach my show." Then he went on to tell 'em how much it cost to feed elephants, horses, animals and to run the cookhouse. Well they settled for \$10 and two short passes.

Another story about Buchanan and Robbins Brothers. Fred told one of the first of May darlings of the Ladies of the Ensemble to "put a little more pep in your numbers or instead of money in your Saturday night envelope you will find a pink slip."

"Oh how nice Mister Buchanan," answered the dimpled one, "Make it size nine."

On the Gentry show we had a ham actor and he wasn't a Smithfield ham. In fact he was very minor league in the acting

department. But one thing he could do and that was standing still.

Claming The Big Wind.

I overheard the following argument between two hands at the stake and chain wagon on "Big Bertha."

One of the fella's was from Texas and being a Texan he had a lot of excess wind. The argument was about who could tell the biggest lie. The Big Wind said, "You can tell first."

"O. K." said the other fella. "Once upon a time there was a bigger circus than Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey." "That's enough," said the Texan. "I know when I am licked."

Possum, the bunkhouse philosopher, was riding Larry Wilcox's bus on the Ringling show. After getting on without paying, he said to the fella sitting next to him that he had beat Larry out of the fare, but he added that he believed that honesty was the best policy. He said "I'll go right back and pay him." "Don't be a chump," said the other fella, "you got away with it, forget it." "No I believe honesty always pays," said Possum. So he got up and paid Larry. When he came back to his seat he showed a handful of coins and said, "Didn't I tell you honesty pays off, I gave him 50 cents and he gave me change for a dollar."

H. B. Gentry was lamenting about the help one got around a circus. So I asked, "H. B. do you think if they paid higher salaries, you would get better men." "I don't believe so, but you would get more applicants."

Arthur Hoffman while side show manager with Hagenbeck-Wallace had the illusion of sawing a lady in half at a town down yonder. A fella who after seeing it done said to Arthur, "That is great, I wonder how it is done?" Answered Arthur, "It is really very simple. I learned it when I was a boy." "That sure is outstanding," answered the fella. "Were there many children in the family?" "No" cracked Arthur, with a smile, "Only half sisters."

Another attraction Arthur had, but this time with Ray Marsh



The Sells-Floto Circus in the Chicago Coliseum.

Bryden's World's Fair Museum, this fella was "Will Knott, the Laziest Man in the World. He was so lazy that he won't sign his name in full—he just signs, 'Won't.'"

My grandson Brian pulled this one on me the other day. "Hey Grandpa I wish I had an elephant." "What would you do with an elephant," I asked. Answered the gunzel, "I don't want an elephant I only want the money one costs."

The day "Big Bertha" closed in Pittsburgh I said to Joe Trosey, "Joe we are like a bunch of defeated politicians, a lame duck." "Like hell, we are

Zack Terrell, circus manager and owner.



a dead duck," said Joe.

A bad circus man is like a bad picture with an admirable frame. The way I figure a successful liar is a fella who never tells a bigger lie about his show than another showman will believe.

Theo Forstall, a long time treasurer of "Big Bertha," is the only man who has worked on both the biggest circus and the biggest carnival, having worked in the red wagon of "Big Bertha" and in 1968 was in the red wagon on the Royal American Shows the largest carnival.

Pete Sells of Sells Brothers Circus made this crack, "There are only two ways to get out of the circus biz." "The first," said Pete, "is to die and the second and only other one is to go bust."

During the run of Sells-Floto Circus in the old Coliseum in Chicago the ushers always figured on putting new life in their rather thin winter B. R. (I was one of the ushers.)

One season after a long and gaunt winter, we did kinda get out line in hustling live ones. So some pigeon got word to Jerry Mugivan, president of the American Circus Corporation, that the ushers were having a field day in the Coliseum. As I also was kinda a glorified office boy in the Chicago office, which gave me a chance to be on the Erie for any choice bits of gossip. One morning I overheard Jerry and Zack Terrell having an argument. Jerry cracked, "Zack you don't only manage a circus, you dominate 'em."

Well Zack sure learned his lessons well, as he sure managed and also dominated Sells-Floto and later his own Cole Bros. Circus.

Among others who also dominated their shows were John and Charles Ringling, Fred Buchanan, Art Concello, John Ringling North, Charlie Sparks, Al G. Barnes, Louie Chase, Danny Odom, Jess Adkins, G. W. Christy, Floyd and Howard King, Frankie Orman, H. B. Gentry, Frank McClosky and Walter Kernan of the present day Acme Circus Corporation, Ben Davenport, Dory Miller, Jack Mills, Ernest Haag, Mollie Bailey, M. L. Clark, Sam Dill,

Noyelles Burkhart, Andrew Downie, Pete Cristiani, Buster Cronin and Howard Y. Bary.

Among the indoor circuses are Orrin Davenport, Tuffy Genders, Rudy Bundy, Hubert Castle, Tom Packs, Jack Leontini, and George Hamid.

And from what I hear James A. Bailey, Adam Forepaugh, and the Flatfoots also dominated their shows.

Of course I can't leave out that fella who manages and also dominates the Baraboo Circus Museum Circus and the big Milwaukee old time Circus parade, Chappie Fox.

I do not mean to infer by domination that they managed their shows by brute force—only a few did that, most of 'em did it by their force of personality and know how of the circus biz.

Possum, who was very much overweight, went to the show Doc and complained of stomach pains. So the Doc told him that he should start a diet and said, "I'll give you an easy diet to follow—which is if it tastes good just spit it out." Well he didn't follow the Doc's advice as everything tasted good to Possum.

John Murray Anderson, the producer of the Ringling show, would give all the girls nicknames. He named Estelle Butler, Roland's daughter, "The Blonde Bomber." So one day on the road Estelle lived up to her name. She caught a coupla of fellas coppin' a peek under the side-wall of the ladies dressing room. I asked her what she did about it. "Oh I threw a jar of vanishing cream at 'em and they disappeared."

Did you know that the list of people getting rich in the circus biz is exactly as long as those getting rich playing the horses.

The owner of an old time grift circus would think that he was in Utopia if he had a fixer who, when he got a beef or complaint, would crack to the Lob, "All we can offer is our deepest sympathy."

One thing a big top canvas hand wasn't afraid of was a big steak in the cookhouse.

Now this is real opposition. When Sells-Floto played Fort Collins, Colorado a day ahead of Ringling-Barnum, who had covered a lot of the



Fred Buchanan, owner of Robbins Bros. Circus.

Floto paper, the Floto boss canvasman Whity Lehrter after he had gotten everything off the lot turned on a fire plug at the entrance to the lot and it ran all night until Willie Carr, the "Big Bertha" 24 hour man, arrived and had it turned off.

Cop and Blow Shorty and Frisco Slim were riding the flats on the Great Windy Van Hooten Circus and being a bit chilly they were partaking of a bottle of Prohibition Gilly Water. As Slim took a belt outa the bottle they entered a tunnel. As he handed the bottle to Shorty he said, "Shorty have you taken a swig outa the bottle yet? If you haven't don't do it. I have gone blind."

If you remember when "Big Bertha" was a name to rally the tribes to battle and the faithful to prayer, you have to be an old-timer. Remember in the old Garden lobby during the engagement of the Big One when Jack Pots (gossip) would be coming in so fast that a fella had to make a reservation at least a half hour in advance if he wanted to be heard.

Good Showmen like Good Generals are made rather than born. Showmen are always admired and respected, but rarely evoke affection and love.

Floyd King in playing his hometown of Dyersburg, Tennessee didn't do so well. So Floyd cracked, "We had

better take my brother Howard's and my picture offa the bills and go back to featuring Big Otto the hip."

Frank Braden, speaking of Alfredo Codona the celebrated flyer, said, "Man if he had wings they would be just in the way."

When I first joined the Sells-Floto Circus I was told it may never give you contentment, but you will never be bored.

During the great depression in 1930 Fred Buchanan, owner of Robbins Bros. Circus, was running into bad biz, so he had to reduce his staff. He went to one of staff and said, "You know biz is bad so I will have to cut down on the nut but I have so many nice fellas that I can't just let go and leave several no good bastards. So I will have to let you go."

Asking an old time canvas hand who never risen above a hand, how he enjoyed life with a circus, "Let me tell you Red it is slavery but wonderful slavery."

At one time Noyelles Burkhart was a great cigar smoker, but he finally quit. So I asked him, "How come you quit smoking stogies as you had one in your kisser all the time." "Well Red, I'll tell you. I found out that it was costing me over a thousand dollars of my time just to unwrap 'em."

When Zack Terrell put Cole Bros. World Toured on the road in 1935 it was during the height of the great depression. I think that Zack came up the impossible way, not the hard way.

If a fella is really with it and for it, he will always find that the sun is shining even if it is raining.

Circus Fixers (Legal Adjusters)

A circus fixer should have the patience of God, plenty of guts, a fella with more Moxie than a horse thief, all of the right words at the right time, a good listener, but a better talker, more tonic than a mother trying to marry her daughter off to the Duke of Windsor, a philosopher who knows the weakness of the human race, above all a great sense of humor and a smile so warm that it would melt icebergs in the Artic, a fella who can fix more with words than money, a polishing touch more like a coupla lovers than Gladiators. Now that is a 24-caret fixer.

Noyelles Burkhart, the fixer on Ringling-Barnum, was the fastest man I ever met with a circus. His feet were always moving even when he was standing still.

Circuses Do Change

Did you know one of the feature stories in the Ringling-Barnum 1952 route book was about the change from the time honored old time canvas lean-to donikers to the modern semi-trailers with running water and other sanitary requirements.

The donikers now repose in all their glory at the Baraboo circus museum.

As Bev Kelley would say, "For those who love the circus world of tanbark and tinsel, train whistles always sound the most forlorn the night that the circus pulls outa town."

Eddie Mader, one of the ticket sellers with the Greatest Show on Earth, promoted the Monday night fights in the old Coliseum in Sarasota. In one of the matches Eddie, being a little short of fighters and being a former pretty fair heavyweight, matched himself, with the Florida champ. Eddie took the nicest dive in the second round this side of the Olympics. So the next day I asked Eddie, "How come." Answered he, "Oh hell I just got tired."

To keep the show bums coming Eddie matched "Nine Blankets" of the elephant department and "Never Bend" from the ring stock department. In the first round it wasn't exactly the battle of the century. After it was all over "Never Bend" chirped up and cracked to "Nine Blankets," "If I had beat you I was going to hold the championship of quarters for one year then give you a rematch" which caused "Nine Blankets," to also chirp up and crack, "How could you hold the quarters championship for one year when you couldn't hold it for one round."

John Murray Anderson, who at the time was the big show's producer, bestowed the above monikers on 'em.

Baldy, one of George Werner's canvas hands, was a collector of stamps so Sidewall Red, his runnin' mate, decided he also would take up the hobby. Lookin' over Baldy's collection



Noyelles Burkhart, circus fixer and manager.

Red said to Baldy, "Will you sell this one?" "Sure," answered Baldy, "How much is this one?" asked Red, Baldy said, "It's a penny." "I don't know," said Red shakin' his noggin.' "Well then," said Baldy "make me an offer."

Remember when side show talkers would crack to the natives during the opening, "Enjoy it now as tomorrow there will be nothing but wagon tracks, busted sodee bottles and empty Cracker Jack boxes here."

Remember during the tire shortage during World War II when a person was only allowed four tires and no spare. This didn't affect a lot of showman I knew as they were always short of the fifth anyway.

When I was a young fella my mother, when she put food in front of you, would say, "Eat it, it's good for you." But when I joined "Big Bertha" George Blood, who ran the cookhouse, would crack, "Eat it, it's good."

Medical science has made remarkable progress, but the death rate is still one per person, which is about the mortality rate of a circus.

Charles Sparks on a visit to Ray Marsh Bryden and his Dan Rice Circus was asked by Ray if he was interested in buying some monkeys that he had for sale. Charlie, in looking over the monks, remarked, "These monks don't have any hair on their knees." "Oh hell Charlie, those are praying monkeys," cracked Ray

without a smile.

The father and son team of circus agents, Bill and his son Allen Lester often were on different shows. The father being a graduate of the old school of circus agents would as soon lose an arm than breathe the secret of where he had routed his show to a rival show. On a visit with his son, who was on "Big Bertha" in Madison Square Garden, the elder Lester shook hands with Allen, who said, "So long, Dad. Where are you going?" "West," replied the man of few words and many secrets.

The Velvet Ass Kid From Old Vermont.

The Velvet Ass Kid From Old Vermont was one of those characters that reminded me of the contracts who circus people used to sign that read, "To make himself generally useful." He was what was called a utility man around grift shows.

The Kid was an artist in tossing the broads (cards) in the deuce notch joints. He could lay a note and was very good at heeling restaurants and hotels. He knew how to work a shive, and how to work the envelope, could drop a pigeon and was an excellent booster handler as he looked like a real yap himself. He could either work paper or silver in the connection and knew how to high-seat 'em. He could do Dutch or Blackface and vent and play the musical saw. He could make openings on the kid show and when the layout super went haywire by going to the pump once too often he could lay out the lot. He could spot a poke on a hayseed a mile away to tip off the "whiz mob" working the march on the midway. On Sundays off he could cook a wonderful Mulligan stew. If it wasn't for his extra curricular activities the Kid would have been snatched up years ago by the Big One. He also worked the Jam Pitch on the blow-off and has given away more Mickey Mouse wristwatches than any man either living or dead during the candy pitch on Mother Murray's Famous Confections. In the winter he wrote sheet for *Capper's Weekly*, using glims for a premium. He also went to Hot Springs to take the baths and do a little touting around the track. He was a wonderful kid worker and

punk pusher as he kept the kids laughing and scratching all the time.

The Kid is now resting on his laurels retired on his farm in Illinois. He said he was strictly a railroad circus bum, but remembers the old time wagon show with a twang in his heart, but he couldn't stand those gas buggy circuses.

The Kid is quite a philosopher. I asked one time if he had ever clouted anything, "No," he said. "I never stole a thing, the good Lord just gave me things that I plum forgot to ask permission to take."

The scratch of the circus seems to have a charmed life.

It is remarkable that so few circuses were ever held up. When one thinks of the way the money had to be handled, I know many a circus treasurer just walked out of the red wagon with the day's take under his arm wrapped up in a newspaper.

Even the big show's treasurer, Theo Forstall, took in a Boston bag and rode to the train in a station wagon. Then in the morning he would go to the bank, sometimes by himself. In later years sometimes he would have a police escort.

The only shows I recall being held up were Hagenbeck-Wallace in Philadelphia and Sells-Floto, I forget the town. Of course there were others.

With the Walter L. Main show the treasurer was Champ Simpson. He was held up in Harlan, Kentucky as he was getting out of a taxi in front of the main hotel. The driver recognized one of the men. He was the son of a policeman. They arrested him, but the money was never recovered.

Another year, while we were showing in Hot Springs, Arkansas with Gentry Bros. Dog and Pony Show, we got word from the local police department that they had been tipped off by a stool pigeon that the red wagon was to be held up that night. I never did see so many roscoe handguns and police. What a reception they would have received. But nothing happened.

All the years I had the programs on Ringling-Barnum I left thousands of dollars in the red wagon and never lost a dime. I also carried many thousands in my kick and carried more to

the train and never lost a dime.

One season while showing Denver with the Ringling show I blew a bank money sack containing over \$4,000. I knew I blew it on the lot and only told one man about it, Doc Hall, who had worked for me for some years.

That night just before the doors opened, I stepped up on my box and on top of the programs was my moneybag with all the money intact.

Willis Lawson was then assistant manager of the show. He had found it and he was hiding behind some cages watching my reaction when I saw the money.

It was nice getting the money back, but then it was only money. It was nicer to think that there are people like Lawson who returned it.

The only reward he got was the big laugh he had when he saw the expression on my kisser, and he never wanted any reward.

With Art Concello's Clyde Beatty-Russell Bros. Circus, when it was a truck show during the war, I rode overland with Art and it was nothing to have \$15,000 or \$20,000 in the car by our feet in the old tin box.

I remember in Paris, Texas we forgot the box and as we never locked the car, it sat in front of the Gilbralter Hotel in Paris all night that way.

When the show closed in Waxahachie, Texas, Art had left a big bank money bag on the floor in the

The back yard of the Buck Jones Wild West show. Circus World Museum collection.

front seat. Several days after getting to Waxahachie, I had to go to the Chevy garage to pay a repair bill on one of the trucks. I gave the garage man a check for payment, which he refused to accept. I said, "Oh hell get in the car and I'll drive you to the bank and they will cash it."

As he got into the car the moneybag was laying at his feet, he said. "What's that?" I said "oh, some tire chains," and just kicked it under the seat. Well that sack of tire chains contained over \$6,000.

Just before the Buck Jones Wild West Show closed (in 1929) we were in Salt Lake City for two days and the plasters were hitting the show from all sides.

While I was talking to the Chief of the Indians he said, "I have \$900 of my own money in the red wagon for safe keeping and now I can't get it out." I didn't think he had picked such a good spot for his B. R.

Getting back to the Walter L. Main show when it was owned by Floyd King. Floyd was a great drinker of Coke and always smoked Piedmont cigarettes. I ran the outside stand, and Floyd would come into the joint, sit on the stock box and drink a Coke and smoke a Piedmont. One day he sat down as usual, but had a moneybag with the previous day's receipts, the works, big show, side shows, candy stands and the joints. When he left he forgot the money bag.

I noticed it on the box, picked it up and threw it in the Cracker Jack carton and forgot about it. Several hours later at the blow-off Frankie





Jack Tavlin, on right, forty percent owner of Russell Bros. Pan Pacific Circus.

Orman, who worked in the connection, came into he joint and said, "Floyd is wild, he blew the bag containing yesterday's receipts."

I told Frankie to tell Floyd I wanted to see him. When Floyd arrived I told him to look into the carton. What do you think Floyd said, "Well I knew it was there all the time."

I never knew of a circus ticket seller or candy butcher going over the fence with any of the show money. Of course some first of Mays took that route.

A funny thing happened on "Big Bertha." I had a trunk, which was a small office. All the pennies I got I just threw in the trunk. One night while loading it the hands had it upside down and some of the pennies came out and the rest made a noise like there was a lot of money in it. John McGuire, a ticket seller, came running for me. He said you left your money in the trunk. Well a few days later in Chicago someone did bust the trunk open, no doubt thinking there was money in there. But, they did not get much for their effort.

Who remembers when Ira Watts was manager of the Ringling owned Sparks Circus. Ira would go through the workingmen's sleepers in the wee hours of the morning when the train arrived in town. He would give this cheerful announcement, "Up and at

'em boys, you have reached the Promised Land."

Remember the old time show bum who always put the finger on flooded show lots. He said, "That shows that water dee's (sic) more harm here than liquor."

I always found it easier finding the show by following the horse and elephant dung than to follow a townner's direction.

Did you ever try selling the glories of trouping to a rain soaked workingman trying to sleep on the flats. And it is no use telling a first of May about the hardships of early day trouping. He has his own to worry about.

When a ticket seller yells himself hoarse at a customer who has left his change he hasn't been selling tickets long.

The Cook's Tour of Russell Bros. Pan Pacific Circus.

In 1945 Art Concello decided to put Russell Bros. Circus on rails. He changed the title from Clyde Beatty-Russell Bros., as Beatty was no longer with Concello, to Russell Bros. Pan Pacific Circus.

The show was built in Shreveport, Louisiana where Art had bought 15 cars, both flats and sleepers, from Barney Garity of the Beckmann and Garity carnival. He also bought a lot of wagons.

Jack Tavlin outfitted one of the cars as a privilege car. It was by far the finest that was ever with a circus. He spent over \$5,000 getting it ready.

Most show managers used to tell the fellow in charge of the privilege car to buy a gallon of paint and the car would be in business. But not Russell Bros. Tavlin had an interior decorator do the décor with drapes on the windows, and a stainless steel kitchen. It was just like a modern Streamliner diner. We used the whole car.

Tavlin had a very good idea for the car. His idea was on late arrivals to feed the

workingmen on the train, so they would be ready to go to work as soon as they hit the lot, not losing time making the cookhouse on the lot.

But it didn't work out that way on account of the shortage of help with the war being on. But I believe it had very good possibilities. On the jump from Shreveport to Los Angeles where we opened in the Pan Pacific Auditorium we used the privilege car to feed the help as well as the actors and at night we used it as a pie car.

The trip to L. A. was a real Cook's tour. It took six days and stopovers were made in Houston and San Antonio where everyone visited the Alamo. Then we stopped over in Sanderson, Texas and we went over to Mexico. Then El Paso and another trip to Mexico to Juarez, then stops in Tucson and Phoenix, Arizona.

The pie car was later sold to the Cavalcade of Amusements carnies and was shipped from El Paso to Mobile, Alabama, where it burned before it was ever used.

You hear so much about economy sizes now days on T. V. commercials. What do you think of a large economy size three-ring circus for a buck. If we had a few fellows with it who were for it, we might be able to make it. And we could go places if we could forget the notion that owning one's circus is caused by the law of averages. But then that's like showmen who said he would go half way to stop a squabble and then go all the way to start another.

But of course you would have something besides the same three faces in different wardrobe in the

Jack Tavlin's pie car on Russell Bros. Pan Pacific Circus.



three rings. But a person must admit that gorgeous wardrobe and shapely gams do detract from the lack of talent.

A smart showman might economize on his salaries a bit, but never on his cookhouse.

Everything has a silver lining if you look for it. Take a canvas hand; he doesn't have to keep books.

Talk about being versatile. George Werner, long time canvas boss on Ringling-Barnum, had a canvas hand called Baldy who in his spare time did knitting. He also collected stamps and knick-knacks. He is still on the show as a train porter.

The Unsinkable Floyd King.

I believe the man who had more circuses and went broke more times was none other than Floyd King.

Floyd and his brother Howard started out I believe on 3 cars using titles such as Sanger Bros., Rice Bros., and Harris, then they got bigger and leased the Walter L. Main and Gentry Bros. titles. They put one on 10 cars and the other on 15. For a couple of years they would switch the titles. One year the 10 car show would be Gentry and the next the Main show and vice versa. They did pretty good for a few years but then the old evener caught up with them. First Howard went the way of The Quay with the Gentry show and shortly after Floyd followed suit with the Cole Bros. World Toured title that he was then using.

Howard went clipped in Paris, Tennessee and Floyd later in Braham, Texas.

But Floyd bounced right back the following year (1930) again using the Cole title. But the old evener caught up with Floyd again, this time in Scottsburg, Kentucky after opening in Uvalde, Texas and making the coast.

Then Floyd joined Al G. Barnes as press agent and later was general agent for Terrell and Adkins Cole Bros. Circus.

Finally he and his brother Howard went into the Wild Life (ding show) business where they made a lot of money.

In 1946 I had the concessions on Art Concello's Russell Bros.-Pan-Pacific Circus. We were playing

Vallejo, California and I went to San Francisco on a buying trip.

While walking down Market Street I heard someone holler, "Hey Will." I rounded and knew it must be Floyd King as Floyd had a habit of calling most everyone Will and another expression of Floyd's was "Now Son."

Floyd had his ding show on Market Street. He took me over there and showed me the setup.

He also informed me that the next year he was going back into the circus biz with Harold Rumbaugh, a department store owner from Everett, Washington. He asked if I wanted to be with it.

I said, "Floyd you have some money why don't you just keep it and forget about the circus business, as the war will be over very shortly and these small trash piles will again go by the way of The Quay."

Floyd didn't take Dr. Sonnenberg's advice.

Floyd and Rumbaugh opened up next year as King Bros. Circus and lasted two years.

Then came the friendly parting. So then Floyd had to have another partner. He then joined up with Cristiani brothers, all 30 of them more or less. Then came another parting, so Floyd joined forces with Arnold Maley and they had two very good and big truck shows.

But the evener caught up with Floyd and he went clipped again.

But he was still in harness and going strong as general agent for the Acme Circus Corporation's Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros., King Bros. and Sells & Gray combinations, but not as an owner.

I had been with him on Gentry-Walter L. Main and Cole Bros. World Toured circuses.

I wonder if Floyd King ever thought of this: Those who worry over what is going to happen to show biz are the ones who trouped and let the boss do the worrying.

A night letter.

Floyd King received a Western



Floyd King, the one and only.

Union telegram from a grifter one spring morning doing adurance time in Liberty, Texas for laying the note. It read, "I am in the can in Liberty, Texas doing sixty days so I will not be at liberty to join you until they give me my liberty in Liberty, Texas."

Floyd was having a coke in the outside stand on the Main show, of which he was the owner. Johnny McNulty was making a sale and cutting a little cake. Johnny made a sale of Cracker Jack. The customer gave Johnny a dollar. Floyd said to Mac, "Give the gentleman three for a quarter." Mac took the dollar, rang it up, then turned around to Floyd and said, "Three for a quarter hell, three for a dollar, that's salesmanship." The funny thing the customer walked away and never beefed.

They say the finest things in life are free and then others say, "anything free take very little of it."

I know as a boy I got a big thrill out of working for a pass to the circus (that is when I wasn't trying to side-wall) but then working for a pass isn't exactly free, you work for it.

Isn't it funny when a person gets elected to office right away he and his whole family start freeload. I never knew of a mayor or other officials paying to see a circus.

In 1928 with Walter L. Main Floyd King ran the following ad in the newspapers, "Free Sample Circus Day-Genuine Circus Sawdust-All You Can Carry-Bring Own Containers." It was surprising the number of people who came for a sample.

Floyd used to say any Yap can run a circus but it takes something to know where to put it--a lot of truth there as Floyd has been a top drawer agent for years.

Down yonder one season in Arkansas with Floyd's Walter L. Main Circus, while the parade was downtown, two towners got into a ruckus. One of them pulled a Roscoe and shot the other on his way to St. Peter.

He had come into town to see the show with his wife and kids, but it being a little early for the circus parade, he stopped into the village gin mill where he got a snoot full of Old Barefoot 100% proof Snootboot and got a little belligerent and so met his tragic end.

Later on they removed his body to the final Measuring. In the afternoon his widow and children came to the show lot. She was overheard telling some friends, "I reckon now that my man Blodgie is dead and I've had him fixed up by the undertaker I kain't do no more for him, and chillum and I cum all the way to town to see the circus and I allow we mought jes as well see it."

In 1929 I met Floyd King in Chicago and wished him a Happy New Year, he said, "What's so happy about it. I ain't got a thing to show for all that on one of his two car turkeys." "But maybe your right Red, I didn't have a thing when I first had a show, and that means I'm at least holding my own."

Another about Floyd. A clown was having a little domestic trouble with his better half while she was on a visit to the show, Her husband said, "Honey, don't I send you my pay every month." "Yes," said the good wife, but Mr. King just told me that he pays you four times a month."

The truck carrying the

big top of King Bros Circus caught on fire and Luke Anderson ran to Floyd King and hollered, "the big top is on fire." Floyd said, "Son, don't worry about it, it was too big anyway."

The law came on the lot of one of Floyd's shows and went up to Floyd and said, "Are you Mr. King." Quick as a flash, Floyd said, "The poor man passed away last week."

Floyd played his hometown of Dyersburg, Tennessee and the good citizens gave him a plaque. So I asked him what he got the plaque for. "For getting out of town when I was a young fella," answered Floyd.

Cutting them up with Floyd King in Chicago the past summer, we were discussing the ups and downs (mostly downs) of the circus business. Floyd said, "When I was broke, I was always thinking of things I would do, when I got into the money, but when I got into the money, I'll be dammed if I could remember any of them and now that I am back to normal again, a bit rich, not broke, I start that thinking over again." Floyd was telling about the time he had one of those ding shows, where it said "free admission, everyone welcome," and when you left they had a ding box where you were suppose to leave a donation. Business was so lousy at one spot it reminded him of the preacher, who, after looking at the collection plate, said, "I always said the poor are welcome—and I see they have come."

Usually in the spring circus man-

King's Cole Bros. World Toured Circus in 1929.

agers have lots on their minds. "First make yourself an honest man and then you may be sure there is one rascal less in the world."

Floyd King on a visit to the Peru winter quarters of the American Circus Corporation was given a lot of general admission hard tickets with the Gollmar title on them, that Jerry Mugivan had used on the Gollmar show. The Gollmar show wasn't going out on the road, and they had no use for them. The Gollmar show had been a 25-car show the previous season. The following season Floyd and his brother Howard had out a 3-car show and they used the the Gollmar tickets that Jerry Mugivan had given him. While showing Tupelo, Mississippi with their little turkey where the big Gollmar show had played the previous year, a fella came up to the red wagon and bought one of the general admission tickets with the Gollmar title on it. He said to Floyd who was on the door as he came in, "This show sure has shrunk since last year."

Floyd King, when he went broke with Cole Bros World Toured in Brenham, Texas in 1929, was asked how it felt. Here is what he said, "On my back looking up."

In the privilege car on Cole Bros. World Toured one of the candy butchers was shooting craps and just as he was about to shoot, he got a wee bit excited and his false choppers fell out of his kisser and landed on the crap table. Quick as a flash one of the Lucky Boys pulled out his own choppers and threw them on the table and said, "shoot you faded."

The last big billing war was in 1959 when Cristiani Bros. Circus and Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus played Sterling, Illinois, a week apart. Cristiani came in first, so Floyd King, Beatty-Cole general agent, had his billers plaster all over town with "Wait for the big show," and he ran ads in the *Sterling Gazette*, full pages saying the same Wait for the big show."



The day Cristiani was in Sterling I was in a drug store talking to Bill Lewis who had the downtown ticket sale for Cristiani. While talking to Bill two ladies came into the store and looked at Bill's sign-so I chirped up and cracked "Ladies aren't you gonna go to the circus today?"

Up chirped one of the lovelies "naw we are going to wait for that big show coming next week."

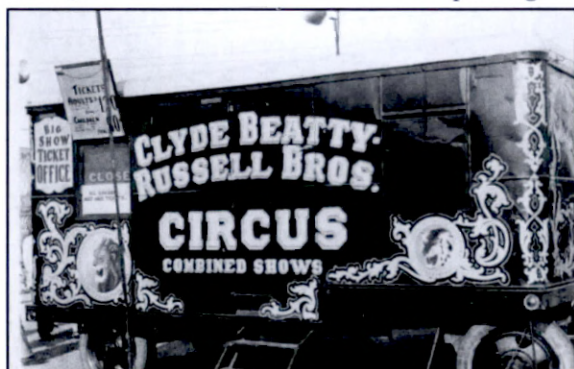
A couple of fending showmen were talking on the Magic Carpet in Chicago's Hotel Sherman. After one of them left the other said, "There goes a fella, who once said there was nothing in the world he and his buddy wouldn't do for each other. That's the way it is, they just go through life, doing nothing for each other."

The lucky boys, candy butchers and ticket sellers were a very versatile bunch of showmen.

Years ago if the boss canvas man around a grift show took it on the Arthur Duffy, there were always plenty of grifters, candy butchers and ticket seller, who knew how to get the ol' rag in the air. They also could do the rigging of the center poles and put up the seats. They were truly a versatile bunch of men.

The circus is an institution developed by ancient civilization to present happiness and laughter of the day. To foster fun and more fun and to lead the public in forgetting the troubles in their daily lives and to furnish a check upon mental

The Clyde Beatty-Russell Bros. ticket wagon in 1944.



Circus Publishing Company

OFFICIAL PUBLISHERS MAGAZINE AND DIGEST

RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS

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OFFICE OF
JACK TAVLIN

Letterhead used by Jack Tavlin's program company.

troubles, which no other institution has been able to provide. Laugh and the world laughs with you.

The late George Ade, the famed Hoosier humorist, once said, "To insure peace of mind, ignore the rules and regulations." That is a nutshell explains circus biz, so it is not like any other biz in the world.

Fred Hutchison, who spent 50 years in the red wagon on Ringling-Barnum, very rarely ever saw a performance.

I received this letter dated September 28, 1941 from Jack Tavlin of the Circus Publishing Company, "Dear Red:

"I finally have the contract nailed down solid with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey for the programs for 1942. John Ringling North gave me a five year contract.

"The first thing J.R.N. cracked was 'Jack I don't want a Hook Nose running the business end on the lot.'

"I told him that you was my man, he remembered you when we had that meeting at the New York World's Fair in 1940 when we tried to prat out Miller Bros. cut of the concessions, so you are my man.

"Do you think that you can swing that Nash car deal through your brother in Kenosha? What do you think of selling local ads daily and putting in inserts? Visit (Dick)

Scatterday with Cole Bros. Circus and talk to him about it.

"Buck Reger wants to come in on this, but I am afraid of Buck, as we can't afford to have any heat in our first year.

"I am going to catch the show in New Orleans on October 11-12.

"I think that is a very

good idea to work the men on boxes like the ticket sellers do and put up signs with lights on them, so I believe that we will double the sale, as Mayer lived in the past.

"I am planning on you to be with me at Goldblatts in Chicago again. You can always contact me at the above address. Kind regards, Jack Tavlin."

In 1944 the Clyde Beatty-Russell Bros. Circus issued this proposal contract.

"Clyde Beatty-Russell Bros. Circus will let the concession department for the 1944 circus season on January 20, 1944. at 4:00 o'clock P. M. in their offices located at room 832, Citizens National Bank Building, 5th and Spring Streets, Los Angeles, California.

"Sealed bid will be accepted from anyone interested in operating same. Said bids to be mailed or delivered to Arthur M. Concello, general manager of Clyde Beatty-Russell Bros. Circus on or before 4:00 o'clock P. M., January 20, 1944.

"Bids will be considered only upon the following terms and conditions:

(1) Offer per week for exclusive right to operate the Concessions, said offer to be accompanied by certified check in the amount of \$2,000.00, which said funds will be held in trust as a guarantee of fulfillment of contract.

(2) Offer on percentage basis of net profit after all expenses have been deducted. Any expense other than cost of stock to have the approval of Arthur M. Concello.

"In placing your bid you further agree that at least 75% of individuals hired by you will be available as truck drivers, and that all employees of your department cooperate in the erection of the menagerie."

Jack Burlem responded, "I will pay \$1,550.00 per week for the exclusive on concessions or will operate department for a percentage of 10% of net profit."

I submitted this offer, "Art, times being what they are, with the war and help very scarce I will take the concessions only on a percentage."

I got the contract.

Side Lights On The Circus Business

PART THIRTY-SIX

By David W. Watt

Editor's note. The dates listed are the dates the article appeared in the Janesville, Wisconsin Daily Gazette.

July 7, 1917

The citizens of Baraboo are certainly to be congratulated on the splendid gift the four Ringling brothers have just made to the city. They are John, Alf T., Charles and Henry, who have just presented the beautiful Al Ringling theater to the city. The greatest and most magnificent gift that the people of Baraboo have ever received will be presented to the city council this evening. It will be the Al Ringling Theater, America's prettiest playhouse, from the Ringling brothers. Henry Ringling is in the city and states that he has been authorized by his brothers to make the gift. In conversation with him yesterday afternoon Mr. Ringling stated the reason for this action is that individuals pass, but corporations cease to exist, and it is the desire of the brothers to give the city of Baraboo possession so that the splendid monument to the memory of their brother, Al Ringling, may be preserved as nearly as possible the same as it now stands. They feel that this transfer is fitting, knowing that their brother built the place for his home people and wished them to have all the enjoyment that such a place might bring to the generations to come. Ringling brothers do not do things by halves and in this generous act they have maintained their enviable reputation, and the people of Baraboo and vicinity will remember them for their splendid deed. Naturally, there would be certain requirements imposed upon the city in receiving this gift, but there are none, however, that the city cannot carry out to the letter. One of the main provisions, and one that will

be approved, is that all the profits of the place be maintained intact for conducting the place properly and to the highest point of efficiency, and to make any needed repairs so that it can be kept up to its present fine condition for all time to come. At present the theater is as complete as it can well be made.--Baraboo Republic

No one knows outside the Ringlings how much the place cost, but it is estimated at something like \$15,000. The fact that the original investment adds nothing to the expense of maintenance, it would seem that the running expense would be comparatively light and that the sinking fund would naturally grow to considerable proportions which would eventually be needed for the general upkeep of the building and the fixtures.

In looking over the history of Baraboo, it is noticeable that until the name Ringling was added to its citizenship, there were no gifts to the public by citizens. Other places in

The Al Ringling Theater in Baraboo, Wisconsin. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.



state have been favored in this respect and some of them on a large scale, but few on such a large scale as this. The world loves and cherishes the benefactor of mankind more than any other class.

And when it comes to theaters beautiful, Baraboo can boast of as fine a playhouse as there is in the United States. When the theater was dedicated a year ago last November, I had the honor of being the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Al Ringling; at their home and occupying a chair in their booth. I have seen many beautiful theaters in my time in the large cities and many larger ones than this theater, but the Al Ringling theater at Baraboo is as fine a playhouse and as well equipped as any in the country. Baraboo will go down in history as being better in more ways than one for the Ringlings have lived there. The theater will long stand as a monument to the name of Ringling.

A few days ago I had a long letter and also a paper from an old friend living in Boston telling of the treat the Ringling show gave to the public one morning during their stay in that city. They took the twenty huge elephants to a prominent place in Boston where the firemen turned the hose on the entire herd and gave them a much needed bath. Before the bathing took place, each of the huge beasts in turn walked up in front of the hose and opened its mouth and each was given its fill of water from the hose. Finally several leads of hose were turned on the beasts and a dozen or more men scrubbed them for more than an hour, much to the enjoyment of thousands of people who had gathered to take in the free show. It is fair to say that this was an advertisement for the Ringlings well worth the money.

New Bedford, Connecticut, which

city for many years has been considered one of the good show towns of the east, has for many years been unable to furnish a lot large enough to accommodate any big show. As I have been there many times under similar circumstances, the following letter from the Ringlings is an interesting one to me, for many times with the old Adam Forepaugh show we were obliged to show under the same conditions which Ringling brothers did a short time ago:

"At New Bedford, Connecticut there was no place to pitch the animal tent of the Ringling circus, the lot being too small. The animal cages were all placed in the street and when the visitors came from the big top, they could walk along and see the specimens from the jungles. This is the second time during recent years there was no room for the animal tent.

"The ballet girls with the circus did a very nice thing. None of them alone could afford a liberty bond, so they joined together and purchased one, giving it to the Red Cross in the town where the bond was brought. The banker who made the transaction gave each of the girls a button. The fifty dollar bond cost the girls a little less than one dollar each.

"The circus finds many foreigners in the New England towns, and there is fear that some of the young men with the circus may have to go to the war. Warm weather has recently favored the show."

July 14, 1917

It was early in April 1866 that a young man in Janesville was taken violently ill with the California Gold Fever. The California gold fields were uppermost in his mind during the day and he dreamed of them at night until he could stand it no longer. He was not long in making arrangements to make the trip overland with the big train that was already organizing at Mankato, Minn., where they were to leave on or about May 1st.

This young man was just past 21 years of age and in a few days joined the party at Mankato and when the party left there, their organization consisted of about 130 men and 50 ox teams which were drawing the heavy loaded wagons containing everything that went to make up a train of this

kind in those early days. Everything went well with them until they reached Ft. Ambercromby where they were detained some three weeks on account of the Indians who were on the rampage and the government scouts would not allow them to go any farther until the Indians were driven from the overland trail. They went on until they reached Bird Tail mountain where they were detained again for about six weeks. It was here that the man from Janesville made fast friends with W. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill), the famous Kit Carson and his cousin Charley, who had charge of the government scouts in that district where the Indians had made much trouble for some time.



Kit [Christopher] Carson (1809-1868). American frontiersman and guide.

The young man from Janesville was John McDermott who is still living on his farm about four miles north of the city. Kit Carson, his cousin Charley, W. F. Cody and John McDermott soon became fast friends. It was during their stay there that Charley Carson was shot by the Indians when out on a scout on the mountainside and rolled down the mountain, as Mr. McDermott tells it today, more than 200 feet.

This was a sad blow to the Indians as well as the frontier scouts for from that time on until the Indians were driven out of that district, Indians were not worth 30 cents a dozen.

Mr. McDermott in relating the story said that Buffalo Bill, the Carsons and himself were all about the same age and when Buffalo Bill or Kit Carson raised their rifles and got a bead on an Indian, he was invariably sent to the "Happy

Hunting Ground."

It was at the organization of the Showmen's League of America that I was one of a party of twenty invited by Buffalo Bill to a dinner at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago that Col. Cody related this story, telling me that a young man belonging to the gold train of California lived in Janesville, but said, "That was so many years ago that I cannot even recollect his first name." It was only a few days ago that I got into conversation with John McDermott who is naturally a better listener than talker, but in relating the story of their trip, he told me of their experiences there and their long stay at the Bird Tail mountains where he became fast friends of the famous scouts, and lo-- Mr. McDermott was in Janesville in 1896 and saw his old friend Buffalo Bill riding in front of the parade and did not make himself known to him. When I asked him why on earth he did not go to the dressing room and make himself known to Buffalo Bill, he simply said, "Well, Dave, I am nothing but a plain old farmer and since the days when Buffalo Bill and I met he has become famous the world over, had hobnobbed with all the royalty of the European countries, and I thought perhaps that he might not care to talk with me or be interested in my welfare. It was only seven or eight years when I saw him in the parade again when he was here with his show in connection with Major Lille of Oklahoma and I did think at first that I would look him up and have a visit with him but to make a long story short, I never did." But knowing Buffalo Bill as I did, if his old friend of the early days had gone to his dressing room and introduced himself, if it would have been necessary, Buffalo Bill would have missed the afternoon show to have had a visit with his old friend, for I never knew a man more democratic than he was or that enjoyed anything more than visiting over early days with old friends long before he ever dreamed of the fame and notoriety that was to come to him later. An hour or two visit with John McDermott over the old days would have done Buffalo Bill more good than the entire receipts of the show in Janesville. While the other three, the two Carsons and W. F.

Cody have passed over the divide, John McDermott is still living, hale and hearty and seldom misses a day coming to Janesville and visiting with old friends.

Pablo Santos and Jesus Artigas, Cuban circus proprietors who sailed on Saturday for the Cuban shores after spending several weeks in America arranging for their second annual tour of Cuba next season, put over one of the biggest circus deals in some time shortly before leaving, when they secured the signatures of two of the best equestrian acts now appearing before the American public to contracts calling for their services with the Santos & Artigas Circus next winter.

The American turns just signed are May Wirth and the noted Hanneford family, both of whom will be absent from these shores during the fall and winter months. The Santos & Artigas Circus season will open in Havana, Cuba early in November with a six weeks' engagement in the Payret Theatre after which a twenty weeks' tour of the island, showing under canvas, will be made.

May Wirth and the Hanneford family are two of the principal features of the Ringling enterprises, the former being with the Ringling show and the Hanneford with the Barnum & Bailey outfit. In the equestrian field there are few who can compare favorably with May Wirth or the members of the Hanneford family. Their reputation is worldwide and their acquisition by the Cuban circus magnates for the season of 1917-18 is considered one of the best.

July 21, 1917

I met a farmer a few days ago who said: "Dave, I have always been interested in your Side Lights On the Circus and never miss reading one. I have often thought if I was thirty years younger that I would hire out on canvas with some big show, and I think in a few years I could have worked up to have been the boss canvasman. While I know that he is one of the first on the grounds in the morning, after he gets his

canvas up, he has nothing more to do until time to take it down again in the evening and that kind of work has always appealed to me." I told him that for years I had considered that one of the hardest jobs around the show and especially seasons when they had many when he was not working putting up or taking down the big tops, was always worrying more or less about storms and was the one man around the show that was considered an authority on the weather. It is seldom that the boss canvasmen with the great Barnum or Ringling shows have much time to themselves, for if there are any kind of storm signs in the weather, they call the men all together and commence to drive extra stakes to hold the big tops in case of a storm. While the boss canvasmen of the big shows are among the best paid people in the business, I have always considered that they earned their money.

John McLaughlin, the master of transportation with the Barnum show, started in the business as a helper with the Forepaugh show in the late eighties and is still in the business and one of the big salaried men with the Barnum show. John carries about forty men in his department and among these are two car repairers whose business it is as soon as the train is unloaded in the morning to inspect every car carefully and see that they are in first-class condition to be put in service again in the evening for the next town. McLaughlin is a quiet, easy-going man, but thorough in all his work, and the owners or managers never

The Ringling winter quarters wardrobe department in Baraboo.



have to fear of John's work being well done as he is always there to inspect everything before the show starts out for the next town.

The boss hostler is another man that always draws a good salary and he also has to be a high class man, for the buying and selling of the horses of one of the big shows is always left to him. While he has several assistants under him in one way and another, the managers of the big shows always look to him for everything in his department to be absolutely right. He has one assistant under him that is thoroughly capable and another who looks after the division of the hay, oats and straw for the horses. It's this man's business to see that every teamster has his allotment and no more, for in these days of high prices, it means something with a big institution like a circus to know that nothing is wasted.

Last April while on a visit to the Ringling show at the Coliseum in Chicago, I met Mrs. Rose Wallace, the head wardrobe woman with the show, and when it comes to working and worrying, this department is where you get it.

That's where Mrs. Rose Wallace comes in. She is a combination of boss dressmaker, historical period student and rainbow painter. She's a costume designer and an expert needlewoman. She has an imagination and an intellect that can grasp big ideas and work them into a stupendous gorgeous spectacle.

You've never seen Mrs. Wallace's name on a billboard; neither is she in evidence when the glittering procession comes pouring into the big top and wends its way around the track.

But if it were not for Mrs. Wallace, that pageant would lose half of its effect.

Last year's pageant went big then, but it would be useless this year; the whole show must be new. "Think up a new one," Mrs. Wallace was instructed along toward the fag end of last season. "We've had all kinds of this ancient stuff, let's do something different."

Mrs. Wallace lay awake nights wondering what

would be new in the pageant line. To make a circus pageant the subject must present the possibility of a glittering flashing, awe-inspiring ensemble. There must not be a dull note in the whole affair. The audience must be sent into enthusiasm at the launching of the spectacle and must be kept there until the end.

The designer thought over many things and then came the big idea--the Orient! Not that portion of the eastern world that has been used so much, but the portion of China, India and other oriental climes where gorgeousness is the watchword and where animals such as are carried by shows have their place.

There is hardly a publication in such countries that Mrs. Wallace has not scanned over and over. She has a staff now at work turning out costumes that will be exactly right. A woman who sighs over the dressing of her family would be dismayed by the task ahead of Mrs. Wallace. She met with brilliant success and produced a pageant which rivals in beauty and immensity Ringling Bros. "Cinderella" pageant, now being given in New England.

Costumes must be made for 800 people. Some of them have three changes in addition to parade "stuff." Besides, there are the elephants and camels to be looked after. Mrs. Wallace has had a wonderful preparation for her job. She has studied designing here and abroad and for several years was in charge of the work for the Metropolitan Opera company. Then the circus claimed her.

She's a bright, hustling, on-the-job sort of a woman who knows what to do and how to do it. In her shop one gets about the only glitter there is around the winter quarters. There and in the paint shop one finds the red and gold and other bright colors that are associated with a circus. Elsewhere all is somber.

Mrs. Wallace's shop is a long white painted, sky-lighted room filled, save in the spaces occupied by the sewing tables, nearly to overflowing with vari-



Costume designers in the Ringling winter quarters wardrobe department.

colored velvets and silks. At the long, low tables a score of women are sewing furiously. Their fingers fairly fly as they pluck beads, spangles and jewels from the table and stitch them to the cloth.

Here are four working on an elephant cover. It's a wondrous affair. The heavy velvet is stitched in design that throws red, gold, purple and yellow into an eye-startling mass. On it are being sewn several hundred pounds of ornaments.

"Which costs the more," I asked Mrs. Wallace, "costuming an elephant or an opera star?"

"Well, that's not very complimentary to the opera singer," she answered with a laugh, "but she could be put through several productions for the price of an elephant cover. The average opera costume costs in the neighborhood of \$200; it is nothing to spend \$1,000 on a single elephant cover.

"First, there's the velvet, forty to fifty yards of it, the best obtainable,

The 1912 Barnum & Bailey Circus baseball team.



and with colors that must be absolutely waterproof. That costs nearly \$5 per yard. Getting into big figures right away, aren't we? Then figure 400 jewels--colored glass set into hand-hammered metal--at 50 to 60 cents each, fifty pounds of spangles at \$4 a pound and beads and embroidery silk and a lot of other things. When one counts the labor cost, the total gets up around the \$1,000 mark.

"Most town people (in circus vernacular there are just two classes of individuals in the world, show people and town people) have an idea that costumes and uniforms used in the show are made of cheap, shoddy materials. If we did use this sort of cloth, I'd have to have a staff several times the size of this one; the suits would be worn to tatters before the season was hardly begun.

"We use the best of materials in everything. It is much cheaper in the long run to do so. Even doing this, some of the costumes look pretty well frayed before we get into quarters. The best materials cost a lot of money, more now than ever before. The war has affected my department more than any other in the show.

"Take these jewels, for instance. You see the metal work is all done by hand. They are made in Austria. There isn't a single firm in the United States making jewels that are anywhere near as bright as these. Then look at these beads. You see they are little glass tubes lined with German silver. Put ordinary glass beads on the costumes and covers and they would be dull compared to these. None of these is made in the United States.

"There are many firms in this country making spangles, but they only put the shine on one side of them. We must show speed here and haven't time to turn the spangles over to get the right side up. With these made in Germany, we simply turn them out of the package and go to work. Our purchasing agents have scoured the country, and I think that it's a safe statement when I say that the

large circuses hold the entire supply in this country."

July 28, 1917

On Sunday evening last I was surprised by having an old friend call on me, one who I trouped with all through the eighties up to the time of Adam Forepaugh's death. His name was Mike Bodkin and he was returning from a trip to the northern lakes of Wisconsin and was on his way home to Chicago. Mike stayed over until Monday evening and we rehearsed many instances that happened while we were together more than thirty years ago. In a way Mr. Bodkin was an assistant manager for many years with the Adam Forepaugh show, and while his work was not strenuous, when anything came up out of the ordinary, it was seldom that Mr. Bodkin was not called on for his advice in the matter. Few men for more than twenty years stood closer to Adam Forepaugh than did Mike Bodkin. Mr. Bodkin is now manager of the Showmen's League of America with headquarters and club rooms on the corner of Dearborn and Monroe Streets, and it is visits like the one that I had with Mr. Bodkin that helps to make life worth living.

That the circus people are doing their bit for the Red Cross the following letter written from the Barnum show to a theatrical troupe gives the particulars as to what they are doing for the Red Cross.

The second benefit ball game of the Barnum & Bailey Red Cross Chapter was one huge success. Second game of the series was full of sensational features and played with big league pep. The receipts were \$1,240.35, all being donated to the Red Cross of Bridgeport, Connecticut, Fairfield County.

The B. & B.L.O.O.M. No. 35 played Happy Jack's Giants. An automobile parade was given downtown before the game started. Those who took part in the parade were the big band, side show band with Zip as the leader; both teams, Bagonghi, mascot for the Moose, Art Mainwood and his Moose drill team and the Red Cross nurses. Hundreds of town folks fol-



The Barnum & Bailey ladies Red Cross committee in 1917.

lowed the parade to the ballpark. The game was called at 5:30 P.M. It is daylight in the Dakotas up until 9 P. M.

The Moose team brought home the victory, although both teams gave a very good exhibition of our national pastime.

Mrs. Monty Hines' Committee of the Red Cross were Mrs. Eugenie Silbon, Mrs. Ella Bradna, Mrs. Victoria Davenport, Mrs. Belle Moser, Mrs. Emily Hedder, Mrs. Rose Wallace, Mrs. Laura Decos, Mrs. Laura Valdo, Lady Alice, Bird Millman, Grace White, Elizabeth Hanneford, Clara Groh, Lupita Perea and Ruth Silbon.

July 4th was circus day for the boys who did not have liberty at the United States Naval Training Station at San Francisco. Paul Williams (Paul Schoene, formerly of Slipp and Falls of the Cooper Bros. Show) was it. Paul suggested a circus and while somewhat handicapped by lack of numbers, pulled it off. He was it. Adorning himself with down white Paul gave the boys a real comedy bump act, then putting on tights gave them such a demonstration of tumbling and aerial work as has never before been seen at the Naval School. Paul was ringmaster, equestrian director, actor and everything. His audience voted the show a complete success.

H. H. Clark, who for twelve and a half years trouped in the United States with Bostock, Ferari, Hagenbeck, Forepaugh and the Ten Big, is now a member of the King's forces in England and would like to hear from some of his old friends. He can be addressed, Sapper H. H. Clark, A. Co. 284148, R.O.D.R.E., England.

A HINDU BALLYHOO

Somewhere in India they had a circus. It was a very good circus, the Barnum & Bailey of Hindustani, replete with more hair-raising thrills and sidesplitting attractions than any other aggregation ever agglomerated, so enthralling that the peanut shells of the loud young man in the seat above fell on your head unnoticed as the summer dew. Notwithstanding the fact that it was managed, directed and performed by Hindus, the performance was Western in character, exactly like the show which played on the back lots of your hometown that night it rained so hard. That is to say, like it except one thing. The Great Indian Circus had no press agent. Ganesh B. Narain secured a clown, an India rubber man and an acrobat, but he forgot to learn the showman's vocabulary. He had never heard of "the stupendous aggregation of miraculous marvels." If he had, he would surely have used it, for he is enough of a showman to instinctively seek the superlative. The following program of G. B. Narain's Circus was sent to one of our readers by a missionary in Dehra Dun, India, and the latter insists that Narain had no intention of making the program humorous. In fact, he treasures this effort as an example of his mastery of English:

THE GREAT INDIAN CIRCUS

Under patronage of Royal Duke of Knaught, K.C.B., etc.

N.M.--This circus is the very better, therefore he comes to see that.

The performance preparation will commence at 8 p.m. sharp. Part I.

1. Some horses will make a very tricks.

2. The known will come and talk with that horses, therefore audience will laugh itself very much.

3. The lady will walk on horse's back and horse is jumping very much also.

4. The known will make a joking words and lady will be come to angry, therefore clown will run himself away.

5. One boy will fall a ball from top-side and then he can catch that ball before that ball can fall.

6. This is the very better jumping trick.

Refreshments, 10 minutes.

Part II,

1. One man will make so tricks of trapeze. Audience will afraid himself very much.

2. Dogs will jump and roll in the mud.

3. One lady will make himself so bend, then everybody he will think he is the rubber lady.

4. This is the very grand display.

5. This is the very better Gymnastics.

6. One man will walk on wire tight; he is doing very nicely because he is professor of that. Refreshments, 10 minutes.

Part III.

Then will come the very good dramatic.

Notice

No sticks will be allowed in the spectator, and he shall not smoke also. Charles for Entrance.

First Class

Rs. 2

Second Class

IS- 1

Third Class

Anas 8

There is no any fourth class.

Ganesh B. Narain, Manager

Baseball Sunday at Fair Grounds. Good game assured. Go and boost.

August 4, 1917

The growth of the Showmen's League of America has been so great the last two years that the club rooms which were located in the Saratoga Hotel on Dearborn Street in Chicago proved much too small for the crowds which naturally congregate there more especially during the winter months.

A short time ago they leased a suite of rooms on the fifth floor of the northwest corner of Monroe and Dearborn Street where they are now located in one of the swellest club rooms in the city of Chicago. At their last meeting of the board of directors they decided on September the 5th as benefit day for the Showmen's League. On that date every outdoor tent exhibition is supposed to donate a cer-

tain amount of their gross receipts for the benefit of the League, this being their second annual benefit. As the membership has been growing much faster than they expected, the receipts of the League are getting well up into the thousands and as it looks now, it will not be long until their ambition will be realized and the building erected for the benefit of indigent showmen where they can spend their declining years in ease. just where this home will be erected is not yet decided upon, but in all probability it will be somewhere in or near Chicago, as that seems to be the most central place for showmen all over the country. Here is where thousands of them gather in the fall and spend the greater part of the winter, especially those out of engagement during the winter months.

A few days ago I had a visit with Captain Fred Collier who for some years has been head trainer for Rhoda Royal, the famous trainer of high school horses. As I have mentioned before, Mr. Collier fell from his horse in New London, Connecticut, on June 5th breaking his right arm in two places which has necessitated his retirement from the business for the balance of the summer. Mr. Collier is convalescing at the home of his wife's parents, Mr. and Mrs. M. J. Dixon, in the town of Rock, and as Mr. Collier says, it is certainly an ideal hospital surrounded by beauti-

James Patterson, carnival and circus owner.



ful shade trees, all kinds of fruit and spring chickens. "Dave," he said, "How can you beat that?"

During our conversation he told me a story of the arrival of two small elephants direct from the captors in Bombay, India. These elephants, he said, came in heavy iron bound boxes and sent direct to Rhoda Royal and were taken from the ship in Philadelphia early in the spring. Mr. Collier said they were but little larger than a good sized sheep, but wild and ferocious as a western bronco. They had to use many severe methods before they could get them to understand that their new owners were their masters. But today both these small elephants are working in the ring and entertaining the public. Little does the general public think that less than six months ago, they were running wild in the jungles of India.

Mr. Collier at the time of his injury was working eight of the high school horses with the Buffalo Bill and Jess Willard Wild West Show and expects to be able to fill an engagement with his horses during the winter in the vaudeville circuit.

After an absence of more than three years of the big shows in western Canada, the Patterson and Gollmar Shows have entered that country and according to a letter written to friends, their business has been phenomenal.

The show has now been in western Canada since June, playing to generally large business. Moose Jaw was lost owing to bad weather, but it is to be visited later. There have been some three points, necessary to include to break railway jumps, and they were not profitable. Aside from this, business everywhere has been big. This is perfectly natural when it is considered that during the three preceding seasons western Canada has been visited by no tent show of any kind. The people were circus hungry and it did one's heart good to see the eight hundred to a thousand automobiles lined up at points which had drawn some of their visitors from farms sixty or more miles away.

It is very probably that no show of twenty-five cars has ever in the circus game had such large gross takings. The dollar admission scale

in addition, of course, to fifty cents for reserves, which has been obtained at every point, except Winnipeg, Calgary and Edmonton, has been responsible for this. All other changes have been in accordance, such as twenty-five cents for the sideshow, fifteen cents for ice cream cones, etc. The high licenses which, however, in many cases were reduced for this particular show, the excessive duty on paper, larger transportation expense have added a few hundred dollars to the daily bill, but it is no exaggeration to say that many days the increased takings at the sideshow has cared for this. In the province of Alberta there is a local amusement tax of five cents on each entrance ticket collected, however, from the patrons, not the circus. The government supplied their own ticket salesmen and while this practice is annoying, in some respects, the people are accustomed to it and it in no way interfered with business.

Mr. Patterson first had three weeks booked in Canada. Later this was increased to six weeks and after the show had been in the country for two weeks, it was still further added to until now the stay there will be some two months.

The present tour is positively the last big clean-up there will be in western Canada as a majority of the larger towns have, since the visit of the Patterson Circus, passed local legislation making it obligatory to charge not over fifty cents admission in order to get a license.

It is rather difficult to understand why the old-time circus owners overlooked this big bet and permitted one new to the game to come in and clean up.

Many people in Janesville and vicinity will be pained to learn of the passing of the beautiful Coop & Lent circus which exhibited here last year, for it went to the wall at Connellsville, Pennsylvania.

Three hundred performers and laborers with lions, tigers, elephants and 110 horses and ponies were stranded here because the Dixon Amusement Company of Dixon, Illinois, owners of the Coop and Lent circus, went into bankruptcy on peti-

tion of the Horne Zoological Arena of Kansas City. The South Side Trust Company of Pittsburgh was named receivers for the company.

The circus will be advertised and sold here, animals, equipment, tents, harnesses, wardrobes and twenty railroad cars going on the block. Many of the performers will sacrifice their back salaries and will quit this section. Most of them are "dead broke." Some of them have not been paid for six weeks.

This is the one sad side to circus life.

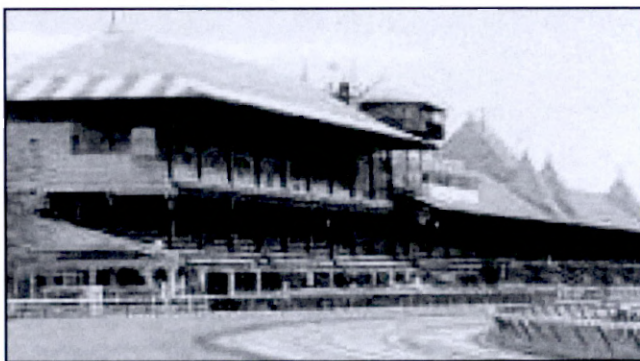
August 11, 1917

It was on August 20th, 1868 that I arrived in Janesville to go to work in a dry goods store operated by R. L. Colvin of this city and the late Isaac Farnsworth, and if grass ever grew greener than this, I have never seen it.

In those days all the stores in Janesville kept open until 9:30 or 10 o'clock in the evening and yet the trade in the evening was rather light. The proprietor and the clerks, as a rule, had plenty of time to tell stories and rehearse the business of the day. All the owners of the large dry goods stores, as a rule, made two trips a year to New York to buy heavy supplies for the next six months. After the return of R. L. Colvin or Isaac Farnsworth from New York, they would have many interesting stories to tell of their trip.

The one great wholesale dry goods house with which they dealt at that time was A. T. Stewart & Co., and was at that time the largest exclusive dry goods concerns in the country. I can well remember how I listened to their stories. It almost seemed

The grandstand and track at Saratoga Springs, New York.



improbable to me for this was the first time that I had ever heard of New York City and its great merchants.

It was along about that time that A. T. Stewart, the millionaire dry goods merchant, built a home on Broadway that ran into the millions with some two or more rooms with no one to occupy it but A. T. Stewart and his estimable wife, as that was all there was of the A. T. Stewart family. It was about that time that a young lawyer by the name of Hilton opened a law office in New York. As A. T. Stewart knew the young man well, he turned his business in the way of collections and other law business that a millionaire might have over to young Hilton.

It was during the long winter evenings when there was but little trade that I listened to many interesting stories by both Colvin and Farnsworth about the dry goods dealer and of his attorney and Judge Hilton. Little did I think at that time that I would live to see or know anything about A. T. Stewart or Judge Hilton, although the stories made a great impression on me—some that I have never forgotten.

A. T. Stewart was a small, quiet, unassuming Irishman who came to New York as a boy, and it was some ten or twelve years later that the dry goods Irishman died and left almost his entire fortune amounting to many millions of dollars to Judge Hilton. Among other properties which he left Judge Hilton was the Grand Union Hotel at Saratoga, one of the greatest hotels in the country, and it was said that they could seat 1000 people at a time in the great dining room.

Saratoga at the time was the great center of the country for the running races and during the summer there would be running meetings held there for ninety days. This brought all the greatest thoroughbreds, not only from this country, but from all over Europe. During the racing season the Adam Forepaugh show would exhibit in Saratoga for two days, always getting there on Sunday morning so as to be in plenty of time to get everything up in good

shape for the show Monday evening.

It was in 1886 that we showed there for the first time during my stay with the show and shortly after the crowd had gone away from the ticket wagon a large, wealthy looking man standing 6 feet 4 inches tall came to the wagon and called for a ticket at the same time cast his eyes over the great spread of canvas, turning to me and said, "Young man, you have quite a city here under canvass." All the time I was wondering in my own mind if this was not Judge Hilton. After he asked me several questions about the great show, I said to him, "Are you not Judge Hilton?" After looking me square in the face for a few seconds he answered: "Young man, how did you come to think that my name was Hilton?" Then I had to go back eighteen years and tell of the many stories I had heard of him and the great Stewart of dry goods fame which I had stored away in my mind all this time.

I exchanged his ticket for him, giving him one in the press box of the show and told him that the performance had already started, that he had better go into the tent and that I would be through with my work in a few minutes, and if it would be agreeable to him, I would go in and have a longer visit with him and tell him about the great show. I also told him that he could repay me by telling me something about Saratoga and the great hotel that he owned. This he did, and he stayed as my guest for the first time for a circus concert. After the concert was over the judge said: "Now, Mr. Watt, you must be my guest to dinner this evening at the hotel." When I told him that I would have to be back in the ticket wagon by a quarter to seven he said: "That will be all right, for we can go into the dining room at 5:30 and I will see that you get back to work on time."

When I entered the great dining room with Judge Hilton perhaps I did not throw out my chest and try to look the part of a friend of the judge. After our dinner was over the judge called a hack and sent me back to the show grounds. When he bid me good-bye he said: "Mr. Watt, you have told me more about the circus business that I ever expected to know and you need not be surprised if some day you

will see Hilton's circus advertised to exhibit in your hometown, Janesville, Wisconsin."

Little did I think when listening to the stories told by both Colvin and Farnsworth that I would ever live to be the guest of Judge Hilton in his famous hotel.

And, boys, I have found that it makes little difference whether you start from the farm, dry goods store or traveling with a circus, if you do it well--that which has fallen to you to do. Then, in a way, you are an A. T. Stewart or a Judge Hilton.

When you meet men of their caliber whom you have heard of for years, and looked upon as great men, always meet them feeling that you are as good as they are, and in a way you are, for you have accomplished what you have set out for and have done it well. As for myself, I had but very little schooling before I left home, but I find that traveling all over the United States and meeting all kinds of people under all kinds of conditions, is an education in itself. I have made it a practice always to be courteous to those with whom I come in contact whether it be east or west, north or south, and it costs so little to be a gentleman that I have often wondered why there were not more of them.

While this article does not savor so much as some concerning the circus, I have tried to sprinkle sawdust enough in the ring so that you will recognize it.

May Wirth, featured lady rider on Ringling Bros. Circus.



As the following news items have to do with old friends of mine with whom I trooped more than thirty years ago, they have at least interested me and I will pass them along to you:

\$13,000 for Red Cross.

The one ring circus put on by John Robinson at the Cincinnati Zoo on July 12 for the benefit of the Red Cross netted \$1,760. Included in the entertainers were old Sam Bennett and Art Dacoma of the Dacoma family. The benefit performance was an unqualified success, the entire affair bringing some \$13,000.

Joins Hospital Corps

Earl Shipley left Patterson & Gollmar Bros. circus at Outlook, Saskatchewan, where he joined the hospital corps of the Second Regiment, N.D.N.G., July 20. "In order to pass physical examination," says Shipley, "I had to have four teeth bridged in, but it's worth it." He will be stationed at Deming, New Mexico.

August 18, 1917

In my article last week of Saratoga Springs, on account of space, I had to cut it short and leave out many things of interest about the great Monte Carlo of this country, for at that time Saratoga Springs was the greatest gambling center of this country.

Many times during the summer large fortunes were won and lost and gambling houses were open as wide as are the dry goods and clothing stores in Janesville today.

During the racing season, people of all nationalities were represented there, many millionaires were located there and everybody in Saratoga seemed to have turned night into day.

The first day that we showed there all the workingmen around the show took in the town at night and but few went to their sleepers until the small, wee hours of the morning. You could walk down the main street of the town and look into the gambling houses where thousands of dollars were piled upon the tables and everybody seemed to have money. It put me in mind of the old-fashioned itch in the district schools of years ago when everybody had it.

After leaving Saratoga Springs, it was several days before the people around the circus caught up with their natural sleep. It was a long time after that when more than ninety percent of the people around the circus of all classes asked, "Did you see this, or did you see that?" when you were in Saratoga Springs.

It was no wonder that my eyes bulged out at such a sight, for the sudden change from the little four cornered town of Juda, where the bell of the milk peddler was the one big attraction of the day, to that of Saratoga Springs. When one puts in years in the business that I did from one end of the United States to the other many times over, there are certainly many surprises awaiting one, that in its earlier life it seemed so little.

On Tuesday next the great Barnum & Bailey Circus will exhibit here in Janesville, and as I knew the late Phineas T. Barnum and James A. Bailey in my time, there are still many old-timers with the show with whom I trooped many years. I will try to gather up a story on the show and give it to you later which I hope will be as interesting to you as it will be to myself.

Miss May Wirth, the great bareback rider with the Ringling Brothers show, tells an interesting story as to her arrival in this county with her bareback horses, and of "Tommy," the caretaker.

Tommy, the diminutive groom with the big Wirth family act, has long since been a factor with the family and bids fair to die in the services of the Wirths. At least Tommy says he will do so.

Tommy is a "Cockney." He talks with a "Cockney" accent and he was born a "Cockney." Any stranger meeting Tommy on the street would immediately think "Cockney." All of which is merely explanatory of what is to follow.

When the Wirth family returned from Europe, Tommy came on a later and slower boat with the horses. Fidem Wirth lost no time on his arrival in arranging for the entry of Tommy and his charges at the New York immigration station. The boat arrived and no Tommy. Fidem received a telegram from Boston to

the effect that Tommy and the Rosinbacks were there. He hurried to the Boston immigration station and was informed that "his man was at the Hotel, while the horses were at a stable." Seeking out Tommy, Fidem demanded to know how Tommy had been able to get through the customs. "Oh, I say, Mr. Frank, I had no trouble at all, you know. I just told them I was a blooming Hamerican and they let me paws." Fidem bought one for Tommy as well as for himself.

I noticed in the advertisement of Chin Chin, one of the baby elephants belong to Rhoda Royal, the famous horse and elephant trainers.

As Mr. Royal and I traveled together for many years with the old Adam Forepaugh show, it was up to me to at least see one performance of Chin Chin, for Rhoda Royal would never forgive me if I didn't see her do her act.

When the little elephant reached the town, I immediately looked up the trainer and caretaker, and from the trainer, I got one of the most interesting stories that I ever listened to. He was a man of just 33 years of age and he put all his life in the business, not only as trainer of wild animals, but spent three years in the employ of Hagenbeck's hunting wild animals in South Africa. The trainer's name is Charles Shonholz who makes his home, when not on the road, in Chicago.

Charles has put in his entire life in the business as did his father and mother before him who have long since died. For many years he has been considered the highest-class trainer of all kinds of animals. Several years ago a vicious lion pounced upon him and before it could be called off, he had lacerated his left leg badly which left him a cripple for life. This was, as he called it later, "happenstance." As soon as he recovered, he was back in the business again. His last achievement was the training of two large chimpanzees,



which he exhibited all over Europe for several years.

Shortly before the war broke out, one of his elephants died and then when the war made it impossible for him to work successfully in Europe, he sold the one that was left to an animal dealer and then came to America.

Charles Hutchinson, long time Barnum & Bailey treasurer.

Mr. Shonholz went directly to Chicago from Janesville where, with several small elephants and Chin Chin, he will finish the balance of the summer at the state fairs of the different states, opening next week at Des Moines, Iowa.

Two small elephants will be driven tandem to a beautiful white, high buggy and a young lady will drive them. This will be given in addition to the other work. Chin Chin will join the band at the fairs and play the bells, keeping perfect time with the band, which will certainly be a high class attraction for the great fairs.

The caretaker of the elephants is Harry St. Clair who has been with Mr. Royal for seven years and is recommended as the Right Man in the Right Place.

August 25, 1917

Barnum & Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth will certainly go down in history as the greatest all feature show that ever visited Janesville.

I thought that if the late Phineas T. Barnum and James A. Bailey could have been here to witness it, they certainly would have said, "It has fallen into the right hands, for Ringling Brothers are certainly keeping the quality up."

From the time of the Oriental Pageant, which opened up the show, until the race was run, every act seemed to be as good as, or better, than the other, and the verdict of the people who were fortunate enough to attend, was of the same opinion. "That it was the best circus that ever

visited Janesville."

Barnum & Bailey spent more than one-half of a century in building up the great show, and all during this time it was the pride of their lives, to think that when they passed over the divide, that the show should fall into the hands that it did, that they would keep on building it up and making it of a higher standard is gratifying to Ringling Brothers as well as to the millions of people who visit the circus every year.

While but few of the old-timers are still with the show, all new and competent men are kept in every department. On account of it being impossible to keep workmen enough to put up and take down the apparatus, there are times when every one around the show, from the front door to the dressing rooms, who must put their shoulder to the wheel and even do much more than is expected of them in order to get the show up and give two performances each day.

When the show pulled into Janesville, they were late, and being short of workmen to the number of nearly one hundred, it was most marvelous that they got up in good shape, all except the menagerie, and gave Janesville patrons the best circus that they ever looked at.

I had a long visit with Charles Hutchinson, the general treasurer of the show, who, by the way, is a nephew of the late James A. Bailey. For many years Mr. Hutchinson has made his home in Bridgeport, Connecticut which is the winter quarters of the show.

I told Mr. Hutchinson that I only recollect two places of interest which I took a look at thirty-five years ago on my first visit to Bridgeport. One of the homes was of the late Phineas T. Barnum which stood on a beautiful rise of ground, something like one-half or three-fourths of a mile from the city, and the home of Elias



Howe, who was one of the first inventors of sewing machines and made millions out of the business. These two famous men were the only ones that were of any special interest to me.

Eddie Silbon, trapeze performer and circus owner.

Mr. Hutchinson smiled and said, "Well, Dave, I bought the old Howe home several years ago and have resided there ever

since." Mr. Warner, the millionaire corset manufacturer, bought the Barnum home and still resides there. At the death of Mr. Barnum, a trust company of Hartford, Connecticut was named as executor of the will. In the will they were to pay Mrs. Barnum \$40,000 a year legacy and the entire management of the estate was left to them. There were originally about sixty acres in the old homestead.

When the Remington Arms Company located their plant there, it gave Bridgeport a nominal boom, and the first year after their location there, the city grew to 100,000. This made the acres of the Barnum homestead valuable. It was then that the ground, something like fifty acres, was plotted and sold into lots.

Mr. Hutchinson said, "Dave, if you were to go back to Bridgeport, Connecticut today, you would need a guide to find either the Barnum homestead or the Howe homestead, where I live."

Charles Hutchinson has been with the circus for many years and when not traveling on the road, he has charge of the great show and its remodeling in its winter quarters at Bridgeport.

Mr. Hutchinson knows as much or more about the show than anyone connected with it, for he was assistant manager for his uncle, James A. Bailey, for many years before his death.

I had a long visit with Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Silbon, who own the great aerial act of seven people--those that swung high in the air from one part of the canvas to the other, turning double somersaults.

Mr. Silbon, back in the 80's, was one of the famous Silbon family which Adam Forepaugh brought to this country from England. After many years the act was known as the "Siegrist and Silbon Aerial Act," and has been the highest class of any in the country. But Toto Siegrist, his partner, was taken sick last winter with Bright's disease and has not been able to work this summer. Eddie Silbon carries on the work just as well, and every salary day he sends his partner his share of the money. It is fair to say that not many partners in any kind of business look after their old business friends as Mr. and Mrs. Silbon are doing. For as long as Siegrist lives, he will know that he has a share of the proceeds.

When the next circus visits Janesville and undertake to step into the shoes that the Barnum & Bailey show left here, they will be hard ones to fill.

The show left Janesville on time over the Northwestern road, for Aurora, Illinois where they showed on Wednesday. From there they went to South Bend, Indiana and after making a dozen of other towns, they will leave for Chicago on the White City grounds for two days, on September third and fourth. On September 8th they will exhibit at Macomb, Illinois, which is the last stand on the route card which they gave me.

The wardrobe of the Oriental Pageant, which opened the show, was the finest ever seen with any circus and cost many thousands of dollars more than any wardrobe put out in any other show.

When the Great Oriental Pageant was over and the last notes of the music had died away, I heard a lady sitting next to me say to one of her friends, "That alone is well worth the price of admission."

When the great band backed up by the wonderful pipe organ, in the snappy way in which the equestrian director of the show put on the acts, all did their part to give the audience a performance that was faultless.

The 2004 Circus Historical Society Convention

By Dave Price

Over fifty Circus Historical Society members, wives and husbands descended on Nyack, New York, starting the day before the advertised registration date and by the rainy Wednesday night of July 14, most had arrived. That evening Bob Sabia set up in the banquet room and showed several boxes of nice old Ringling-Barnum tent show slides. The usual wags provided commentary. Ray Gronso and Gordon Taylor were sorely missed this first night, though Ray did provide our badges. Did everyone pick up Ray's tongue-in-cheek humor in picturing the "other" Elephant Hotel on the badges?

Presenter Bob Sabia. John Gilmore photo.

The following morning, President Al Stencell officially kicked off the convention after our complimentary continental breakfast. Al welcomed one and all and announced that the convention would be a memorial to David G. Mullaney, circus and carnival workingman and long-time collector.

Presenters Terry Ariano, Dave Carlyon and Stephanie Monseu. John Gilmore photo.



President Stencell opened the convention. John Gilmore photo.



Al spoke of his friendship with Mullaney, which began when they had worked together on Bill English's Sells and Gray. Later Dave Price, who had worked with Mullaney on Beatty-Cole in 1960, and who also had kept up with him until Mullaney's death, added a few memories.

Stencell presided over the morning papers which began with David Carlyon speaking on the familiar photograph heretofore believed to be the 1864 Dan Rice

show. Doubts are now cast on the dating of this image, and possibly on the show depicted as well. It was a riveting paper and fitting opener.

Next came Stephanie Monseu, of the Bindlestiff Family Circus, telling about current New York City Side Show and Burlesque trends. Stephanie related her own early fascination with side show people and acts, her working for Ward Hall and later a Punk Rock Circus (a genre new to many of us).

Closing the morning session was Terry Ariano of Somers, New York, site of the Elephant Hotel and museum. Terry entertained us with many stories and slides of the early menagerie and circus men of America. After a break for lunch, we were called back to order and Past President Richard Reynolds presided



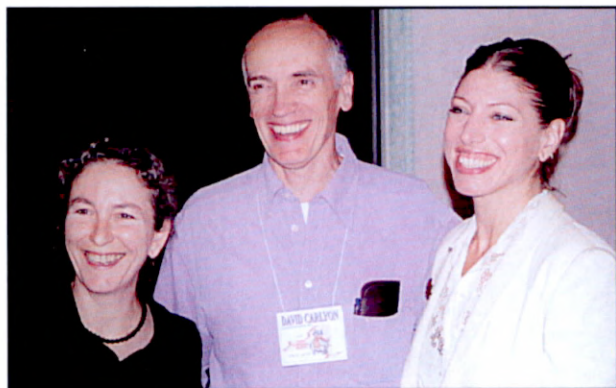
over the afternoon session with the style and poise that only a gentleman of the Old South can muster.

Presenter Bob Commerford. John Gilmore photo.

Opening was Ken Kawata of the nearby Staten Island Zoo with a slide presentation

on American male elephants of the

Presenters Rick Perdue and Steve Gossard. John Gilmore photo.





The head table at the banquet. Bob Sugarman photo.

late 20th Century. Featured were Diamond, Thonglaw and Tommy (King Tusk) with great attention given to Tommy's personal attributes. Vice President Bob Sabia, also using slides, gave a very informative talk called "You May be Sure There Were Others" about circuses other than Ringling, which played the United States during the post World War II years. Bob has probably done more than any other person to track down and preserve footage of shows past and as expected he came up with some rare shots and tales of outfits like Jimmy Cole, John Pawling and Rogers Bros.

Bob Commerford, of Petting Zoo fame, won his audience over with his folksy warmth and experiences. Bob doesn't fit the stereotype of a circus man, but he has amassed a long career in exhibiting animals and has dealt with many of the names we recognized. His story of buying "the rogue from the Cincinnati Zoo" will be long remembered. It was a very informative and delightful talk.

Then came the evening break and we suspect that there were glasses clinking in some rooms as when we reassembled for the traditional Happy Hour. Of course we always opine on the quality of the banquet and we must say all enjoyed it. The only gripe we heard was when they ran out of diabetic blueberry pie when a number requested it for reasons of weight as opposed to those of health.

Todd Robbins, side show talker extraordinaire, was our banquet speaker and got hearty rounds of applause with his renditions. Until you have heard Todd explain the five

Todd Robbins' block head number. John Gilmore photo.

necessary components of a side show opening, you can't appreciate the art form. He was scheduled to be our host the following day at Coney Island and all looked forward to this experience.

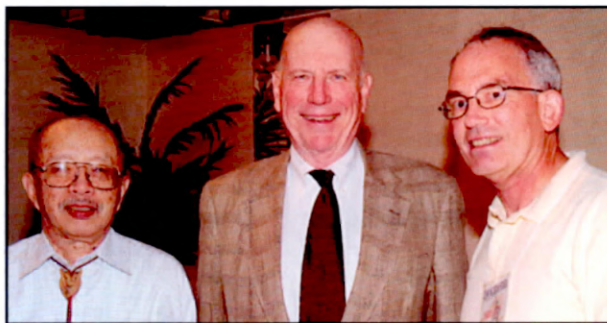
Friday the 16th found our group chatting excitedly around the breakfast tables in anticipation of the big field trip; not only had Al arranged for a trip to Coney Island but a visit to the "New Cole Bros Circus" was also on tap.

Dick Zigun "Mr. Coney Island." Bob Sugarman photo.

After a slight detour the bus arrived at Coney Island and was met by walking tour guide Todd Robbins, dressed in a red suit and straw hat. Moving across the street the group lined up at the original Nathan's Hot Dogs for lunch. The group was served with a variety of libations and side orders.

Paul Ingrassia in a 1905 boardwalk rolling chair in the museum. John Gilmore photo.

Robbins then began a tour of the famous boardwalk and all of the grease joints, Parachute Drop skele-



Ken Kawata, Richard Reynolds and Jim Alexander. John Gilmore photo.



ton, Cyclone roller coaster, the Wonder Wheel giant ferris wheel and the Astroland amusement park. Alas, Luna Park and Dreamland were not to be found.

The group finished the tour at Surf Avenue and West 12th Street, the location of the Coney Island Museum, which although still in its formative stage, was nevertheless rewarding to historians of related fields and all felt that it was off to a promising start.

Dick Zigun, President of Coney Island USA, greeted the CHS and told of the history of the building. Marie Roberts, banner painter and Coney Island historian talked. She was followed by Jennifer





Todd Robbins in front of the Coney Island Museum. John Gilmore photo.

Miller, bearded lady, who told the group about Circus Amok that presents circus performances in New York City parks.

Presenter John Thiele. John Gilmore photo.

Then came a visit to the Sideshow by the Seashore, an old time "Ten in One" in a small auditorium seating ninety-nine people.

Back on the bus the group headed for the New Cole Bros. Circus lot in Brooklyn's Marine Park. Owner John Pugh greeted the CHSers as they were busy taking photos.

Despite our disappointment that

Paul Gutheil and Dale Riker at the circus. John Gilmore photo.



the show had bowed to the animal rights protests and carried no elephants, we were very pleased with the performance. After this long, long day, we finally got back to Nyack at about midnight.

Saturday the 17th began with the news that the Circus World

Museum Board had closed its great library. This cast a pall over the breakfast crowd, but a second shoe was yet to fall.

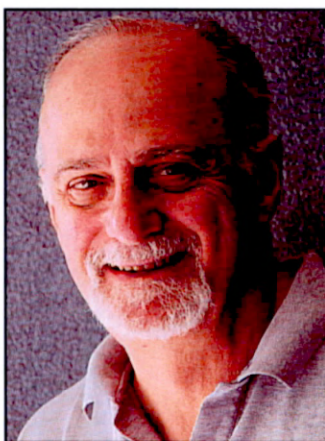
When President Stencell took the podium to preside over the morning session, he announced that old friend and longtime elephant man Bobby Gibbs had passed from this life.

Buddy Calhoun then passed out forms and asked members to vote on their

favorite circus book. We are curious as to how this survey comes out.

First up on the program was John Polacek with an interesting account of the formation of the diminutive and short-lived Price and James show back in 1897. Apparently John was the first to discover this show's existence and any of its remaining artifacts.

Next came Bob Sugarman with "Whistles and Walkabouts," being his observations on the changing roles of the clown and the ringmaster. He spoke of the engaging exchanges between these two leading characters of the primitive circus and how this amusing by play is not considered genteel enough for the new circus. While on the subject of gentility,



Presenter Bob Sugarman. John Gilmore photo.

Bob voiced his opinion that the animal rights movement has a lot to do with the more fastidious wanting their circuses in "a dung-free setting in which no offensive smells reach their deli-

cate noses." Back to the paper, Bob lamented the loss of the talking clown and encouraged support for those who have found a way in this

electronic age to restore verbal humor to the circus ring.

Presenter Bill Slout. John Gilmore photo.

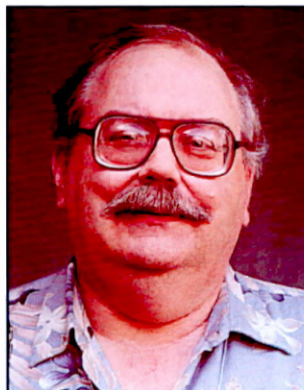


Another "gentility" comment was made by a member of the audience who related how he

had been admonished by an executive of the Big Apple Circus for whistling, a form of ovation apparently not deemed appropriate at that show.

John Theile closed the morning session with an engaging telling of the many-faceted life of Col. William F. Cody, the remarkable Buffalo Bill. John brought his own cheering section in the shape of two grandsons, but the response would have been great even without them. This was John's debut paper and we hope there will be others.

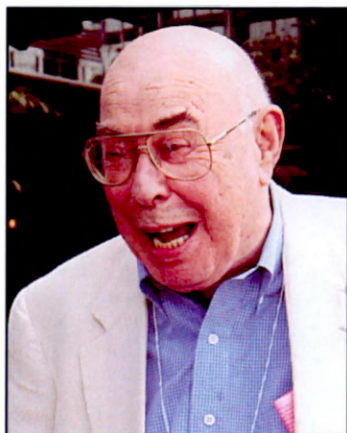
Presenter John Polacek. Jim Gilmore photo.



The confines of the modest lunchroom of our hotel were again strained by a sudden

surge of hungry historians but the staff managed to satisfy our pangs without complaint.

Presenter Stuart Thayer. John Gilmore photo.



The afternoon session was presided over by John Polacsek and was a good strong one to close the convention. Stuart Thayer, master historian, led with a chapter of his in-progress Adam Forepaugh biography. His title: The Noblest Roman of them All" refers to a defining of "Forepaugh the man" by his press corps, an aspect too often ignored in our counting of cars and wagons.

The always awesome Dr. Bill Slout followed with "From Rags to Ricketts," being a captivating investigation into the "not quite circus" entertainments that played New York City in the period leading up to Ricketts' first engagement in the City.

Ken Kawata and Richard Reynolds in front of the Elephant Hotel. John Gilmore photo.



At this point, Jim Alexander rose to give a very nice tribute to Bobby Gibbs, his close friend for many years.

Rick Purdue and Steve Gossard collaborated to bring us our final attraction, a Power Point presentation on the 1953 Ringling-Barnum show. And a dandy one it was. Some of our older readers recall Sverre O. Braathen, CHS member of old. Braathen's wonderful collection of slides, films and photographs ended up under Steve's care at Illinois State. He had approached Rick for ideas on making Braathen's 1953 Ringling-Barnum material suitable for presentation to the convention. Rick amazed all by blending this assortment of material into an enjoyable and enlightening presentation.

Most members came back that evening for the annual auction. Those who skipped missed Stencell's hilarious comments on how to get to Somers and the Elephant Hotel, a post-convention junket planned for the next day. The way Al saw it, we ought to get Henry Bush to "arrow" us in, using pretzel sticks for arrows. There wasn't a dry eye in the house when Al finished. Fortunately Dick Flint followed with the correct and simplest directions to Somers.

Al ran the auction himself with help from John Polacsek and Ed Todd and possibly others (sorry for



The group of CHSers that visited the Elephant Hotel. John Gilmore photo.

any omitted names). After each major sale with high dollars, Stencell rewarded the audience with one of his jokes. Despite a few groaners, Al managed to sell the gags right along with the memorabilia and we brought in over \$1,700 a higher figure than we had anticipated. It was not our best year, but still helpful to the coffers.

We should mention the trek to Somers the morning after the convention. It began with a tour of Ivandell Cemetery, resting place of many pioneer showmen. Stuart Thayer provided a written brief on the importance of the men who lie here and we stopped at a number of graves to pay our respects. A group photo was taken before the obelisk of Hackaliah Bailey, whom Thayer acknowledges as the originator of the traveling menagerie in America.

The museum is on the top floor of the famous Elephant Hotel, now the Somers Town Hall. While not a major museum, the display is certainly pleasing to folk interested in early menageries and circuses. The famed Zoological Institute was organized at this site in 1835. One hundred fifty years later in 1985, under the presidency of Dick Flint, the CHS made this trip a group endeavor. After nineteen years we came back and we encourage others to make the pilgrimage.

Except for some last-minute farewells in the hotel parking lot, the 2004 convention was over. What great memories we all carried home.

CONEY ISLAND AND COLE BROS. CIRCUS



Photos by John Gilmore, Fred Pfening and Bob Sugarman.

BARNUM & BAILEY

NEW
MAGNIFICENT
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LALLA ROOKH



THE YEAR'S BEST HOLIDAY

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